

PREACHING IN ENGLISH WHERE
MULTIPLE LANGUAGE GROUPS ARE PRESENT

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I dedicate this thesis to my wife and family. I am extraordinarily blessed to be married to Darby for 29 years. Together we've raised two amazing children, Michael and Bethany, and have served the Lord together as a family in ministry. "How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called the children of God." I
John 3:1

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ABSTRACT

This thesis-project addresses the problem of how sermons are heard and misunderstood by those who have a different language of origin from the English speaking preacher. It presents the challenge for pastors preaching sermons to people from multiple language groups by examining the ingredients of communication and presenting an approach to preparing and delivering sermons.

Preaching in English Where Multiple Language Groups Are Present is the resulting seminar that teaches a system of preparing sermons. The preparation of a sermon involves a six step process which is listener-focused. The pastor's effective delivery of these sermons requires an understanding of how verbal and nonverbal categories of preaching will impact listeners of different ethnic groups. What results from effective preparation and delivery is preaching that builds bridges between God's word and the listener.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Missionaries inspire me. They connect the hearts of their people to the truth of God. At times I have spoken God's Word through a missionary's able translation of my English into the native language of the audience. On those occasions I am impressed by what is taking place as people listen to the sound of my voice and search the expressions of my physical appearance. Skillfully guided through the secondhand presentation by my colleague, those members of the congregation are brought into a conversation with the living God. We are reminded of the words of Nelson Mandela who once said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."¹ Missionaries can talk to people in the language of their hearts. Unfortunately, most preachers cannot speak in any other language but their own.

Each Sunday people from many language backgrounds attend worship services where the English language is spoken. Most of the congregants present hear the words that are spoken (and sung) and will know their meaning. But there are worshipers who have a heart language that is different from the speaker. They will search for meaning through making the necessary translations in their minds and do it without the benefit of an intermediary such as a translating missionary. Preachers who have labored long in preparation and preached well from the platform will sense that effective communication has taken place. International worshipers will exit with a smile, shake the preacher's hand and express appreciation for the message. But if the preacher were to ask those

¹ Nelson Mandela, *In His Own Words*, CNN.com/world, (June 26, 2008).
<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/06/24/mandela.quotes/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2009).

attendees who grew up speaking Korean or Chinese or Spanish if they understood the sermon he might be surprised to discover how some important idea did not make sense. He might be surprised to learn that what was heard was understood much differently. The preacher might be shocked to find out that some nonverbal element of the sermon brought offense to a worshiper. He might be saddened to learn that the one and only “hearing” of God’s word resulted in missing both the head and the heart of an international listener.

We have an increasing problem in the local church. The problem is that the message preachers are sharing is often misunderstood by representatives of ethnic groups that are different from the preacher. The problem of misunderstanding may occur in the local church in nearly any city of the United States of America. This problem causes the Christians in the audience to miss opportunities for spiritual growth. This problem causes non-Christians in the audience to miss the truth of the gospel. In the past certain churches may have experienced this problem more than others. Churches located near a university may have had more international attendees. Churches near companies that employed international people have seen some of them visit their services. We may not have realized the problem of misunderstood messages at first because many international people have attended ethnic churches where the language spoken is the language of their heart. But as our international attendees have assimilated into more English-speaking churches, the increasing nature of the problem is more readily observed.

The problem of misunderstood messages has revealed itself to me over the years in a variety of ways. It has happened in conversations that church attendees have had with me regarding issues that did not necessarily deal with a sermon I preached. Once I

was having lunch with an Asian family in a former congregation. They were ready to establish their membership with our church. I will always remember the day we talked about a membership class I was thinking of scheduling at a certain day and time. I asked Mike and Cindy, “Does this work for you?” On one hand the couple was unclear about the colloquial expression I was using. I should have asked, “Does this meeting time fit into your schedule?” On the other hand the couple did not think that it was up to them to help set the schedule. In other words, “We should attend on the day you have planned for it to be.” It was a communication lesson I will never forget.

Today I serve as Pastor at Mt. Washington Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Our congregation is about to enter into a partnership with a Chin congregation. The Chin people represent one of the many persecuted tribal groups of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). They come to the U.S. not so much to better their lives as they do to survive the dangers of living in a police-state. Remarkably, 97% of the Chin people are Christians. They are quite open about owing their spiritual allegiance to the American Baptists because of the missionaries we sent to Burma in the 19th century. In a recent letter the aforementioned Chin tribal congregation communicated their church’s desire to affiliate with our Association with these words: *Because of our deep appreciation of American Baptist missionaries, we want to relate to American Baptists as we begin a new life in America. Therefore, we are requesting membership in the Miami Baptist Association so that we can develop that relationship with those who made it possible for us to have “eternal life.”*

I recently contacted our Executive Minister in Indianapolis, Indiana, where the American Baptists have two Chin congregations. Through her I am learning that what

was once a matter of refugee resettlement has morphed into a different process of helping refugee groups. More than ever we are practicing hospitality on a tribal scale. In our denomination we are encouraged to expect more tribal groups to arrive in the Midwest in Ohio's cities like Toledo, Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. The people come to our cities in groups. They search for American Baptist Churches to attend. We learn because of the advice of those who have welcomed them.

The communication lessons keep coming and take place often after worship services. In talking with pastors of other churches of my denomination I find that I am not alone. In broken English people of various language groups ask questions about the worship service that cause me to wonder how they could have comprehended any part of my sermon if there had not been a printed outline of the message in the worship folder. The need for preaching to effectively communicate from one culture to another is at an all time high. "Churches are under stress because they are nowadays called to minister in a society of multiple cultures and hence multiple ritual traditions."² What once was a condition within major cities has become a condition in average towns to smaller communities. These international people had once come to our medium and small town churches with a higher degree of assimilation into American culture and the English language. Now they come with only a basic knowledge of the English language.

The American Baptist Churches U.S.A. has the potential for increased international people attending our churches, representing more language groups than ever before. For more than forty-five years American Baptist congregations have been resettling refugees, one family at a time. In that period 98,000 refugees have been resettled through our denomination. We work with a variety of agencies like Church

² Thomas H. Troeger, *Preaching and Worship* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 79.

World Service Immigration. They provide advocacy efforts on behalf of refugees. Along with other resettlement agencies and various denominations we are making a difference in the lives of displaced people groups. Over these past few decades the refugees have arrived in our congregations for worship. They have been met with love, but with a Biblical message that is often confusing to decode.

When we speak of language as a form of communication we are talking about how listeners find meaning. Meaning is obscured or distorted at multiple levels. One level is content. Although people know some English, they do not know all the words we say and how we arrange them. Our choice of supporting material for the points we make is drawn from a well of culture that is alien to the ones who wander into our land. They assign the wrong meanings to our stories, our humor, and our references to pop culture. While we try desperately to connect with our American audience we inadvertently lose connection with our international audience.

Another level at which meaning is obscured is delivery. The tone and volume of our voices create dissonance for listeners from other languages. The gestures, facial expressions, and posture of our bodies are at times distracting and at other times offensive. When we try to reflect on these issues of meaning we remain powerless to make changes because we fail to ask the very people who can tell us the answers – our listeners! In order to address the problem we must raise a number of questions and answer them.

In chapter two of this thesis we will explore the questions of what the Bible has to say. Does the account of the book of Acts tell us anything about preaching from a common language? How did the Greek language help the apostles and first evangelists to

make inroads with cultures that they did not know as well? Were there specific rhetorical devices and images that were used by those who preached to break down walls between people of different world views? We will turn to the writings of Darrell Bock, F.F. Bruce, Michael Green, and others to carefully examine New Testament texts that speak to issues of cross-cultural preaching. Does the literature of the epistles give us clues regarding theological foundations for preaching that bridges the span between cultures? We will examine the writings of John Stott, William Barclay, George Ladd and others to assess how God's word instructs us that He has bridged the span and what we may do to join Him in it.

In chapter three we will consider the question of what literature on intercultural communication has to say about this issue. First we must pay careful attention to the issues of anthropology and missions discussed by Charles Kraft, Lesslie Newbigin, Donald K. Smith, D. A. Carson, Donald McGavran, and Darrow Miller. These writings will give us the broad picture of cross cultural ministry in a socio-theological context.

Next, we will survey books on preaching that includes emphasis on worldview, beginning by studying Scott Gibson's book, *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. From there we will look at *Preaching to Every Pew* by James Nieman and Thomas Rogers, *Preaching and Worship* by Thomas Troeger, and *One Gospel Many Ears* by Joseph Jeter and Ronald Allen. These volumes raise questions with sociological implications for preaching. How do we address the topics of time, economics, justice, and the many ways people relate to each other within a community?

Thirdly we are looking at this topic as an issue of communication. We will begin with two comprehensive treatments of language. *English as a Global Language* by

David Crystal is a key book written from a non-Christian perspective. *Creating Understanding* by Donald K. Smith is a book that presents communication through a system of propositions. *God Still Speaks* by Robert Webber, *Communication, Media and Identity* by Robert Fortner, and *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* by David Hesselgrave will all help us answer some important questions. What is the relationship between language and meaning? How do people encode and decode the messages we call sermons? Are there limits and advantages with English that need to be considered? How does preaching fit within the larger context of a worship service? Are we talking about culture or about ethnicity when we consider the people in the audience? Are international people all raising the same basic concerns for effective preaching, is there an overlap, or are the questions different based on the separate language groups they represent?

It is critically important to address this problem because English-speaking pastors have an incredible opportunity in the churches where they serve. English today is much like Greek was 2000 years ago. What Michael Green describes as the role of the Greek language in first century Gospel preaching, English seems to have assumed today. It is a language employed for economics, for politics and for philosophical debate. It is a language that much of our world wants to learn. When Paul was asked in Acts 21:37 if he spoke Greek, the author indicated that the apostle knew how to establish common ground for gaining permission to preach his message.³ (Then he spoke in Aramaic!) English establishes a common ground for those who want to speak from the Bible today. Those who are doing that are the pastors who weekly preach God's word in the local

³ Michael Green, *Evangelism in The Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 33.

churches. I am one of those pastors. Although the target of this project is the pastor in the local church who preaches God's word, I intend to make the specific target of my project a group of American Baptist pastors in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Who will benefit from this research? The people who will directly benefit from this research are pastors who preach weekly in our pulpits. Another group to benefit from this project will be the international people attending the churches. They will hear from messengers who have considered more carefully how to preach God's Word. It will be transmitted more clearly and with a greater sensitivity to the variety of people who will hear it. Everyone benefits when larger ideas from scripture are engaged with integrity and communicated thoroughly.

My intention is to use this research to put together a seminar for preparing to preach and deliver effective sermons in English where multiple language groups are present. That manual will be the basis for a three-hour seminar I will conduct for pastors in the period of November, 2010. The seminar will be divided into two sections. One will be devoted to preparing effective sermons for the international ear, and the other section will focus on the delivery of those sermons. I will advocate for a method of obtaining feedback from international listeners that will create a loop of information for those who preach. That feedback loop will become an ongoing feature of the preaching in the church where international attendees are present. In preparation for the manual I will not only incorporate written research but conduct interviews with leaders who are teaching and preaching in congregations where international attendees are present.

For people to learn through the seminar I will prepare and preach for my local church a series of sermons utilizing my research findings. The series will be from the

book of Ephesians. I will conduct a feedback system with attendees who are international, speaking English as a second or third language. I will then lead the seminar for American Baptist pastors in Cincinnati, Ohio. We will aim for one outcome: *By using a system, preachers will be able to preach effective sermons in English with multiple language groups present.* Preaching these sermons is a skill. It requires a change of how the pastor will prepare sermons. Two goals will help us reach this aim. The first goal is for the students to learn how to write the big idea of a sermon so that as a theological idea it can be placed in dialogue with a worldview contradictory to the Bible. The second goal is for the students to learn how to write their sermons in advance to omit ideas, words and phrases that increase misunderstanding. I will provide guidance for how to intentionally prepare sermons with ideas, words and phrases that are universally understood and to deliver those sermons with the fewest possible errors with voice, eye contact and gestures. We will accomplish this in two ninety-minute sessions. Both sessions will help students learn skills of preparation and delivery through my use of lecture, testimony, discussion, practice, review and prayer. Throughout all of this learning I believe that something else will happen. Preachers will find that they are not only communicating more effectively with the international audience, but also with the larger part of their audience who speaks English as a primary language.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

New Testament preaching carried a message like nothing before it. “Christianity burst on the world with all the suddenness of good news: good news proclaimed with great enthusiasm and courage by its advocates, and backed up with their own witness and experience.”¹ The verb *euangelizesthai* is found fifty-two times in the New Testament.² It was a message Jesus referred to as the gospel, and it was to be “preached to all nations.” (Mark 13:10 [New International Version])

The Gospel of Jesus Was Communicated Across Cultures

What Jesus had called “good news” was nothing less than the fulfillment of a prophecy found in Isaiah 61 which Jesus read aloud in a synagogue service described in Luke 4:14-30. After reading, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor,” Jesus announced, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21) Nothing would be the same again. From the beginning it was the plan of Jesus for the gospel to be effectively communicated across cultures.

The Plan of Jesus: Ministry to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles

A ministry that commenced in Capernaum of Galilee would have remained there if left up to the followers of Jesus. “...they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he

¹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), 48.

² David Watson, *I Believe in Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 26.

said ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’” (Luke 4:42-43) Although this traveling mission initially kept Jesus preaching in Jewish synagogues, his plan called for him to eventually minister with Samaritans. According to John’s gospel Jesus passed through Samaria by necessity. “Now he had to go through Samaria.” (John 4:4) While some might think that this expression describes a limited number of choices in geographical routes, it is well understood that the Jews would typically go well out of their way to avoid traveling through Samaria. The word translated “must” or “had to” appears often in John to describe the mission of Jesus. “The expression points to a compelling divine necessity. Jesus had come as ‘the light of the world.’ (9:5) It was imperative that this light shine to others than Jews.”³ It was at a well Jesus met a woman who came to believe he was more than a prophet. “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29) The woman at the well shared the news of Jesus with people from her community, but it was the words of Jesus that made them believe. The words of Jesus, referenced in v. 41 refer to the gospel. “It is the whole message for which Jesus stands.”⁴

“Almost certainly the fourth evangelist will have viewed this breaking down of walls between Jew and Samaritan as Luke viewed Philip’s evangelism of Samaria: a major step in the Church’s advance to mission to the world.”⁵ When they referred to Jesus as the Savior of the world it was a title claimed by the Emperor. They were saying, “...that the title rightly belongs to Jesus alone, and also that, as Redeemer and Lord, Jesus

³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 226.

⁴ Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 250.

⁵ George R. Beasley Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 66.

fulfills the hopes of Samaritans, Jews and the world of nations.”⁶ Clearly, Samaria was not the final frontier for Jesus’ ministry.

How did Jesus minister to Gentiles? In Luke 7:1-10 we read of his healing a Roman centurion’s servant. Elders of the Jews were messengers telling Jesus of the Centurion’s worthiness. “...they pleaded earnestly with him, ‘This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.’” (Luke 7:6) Stating his unworthiness in verse 7, the centurion believed he had no access to Jesus. Therefore he sent representatives instead of coming directly to Jesus himself. As Jesus approached his house the centurion saw the difficulty in the situation that was about to occur. He sent a second set of representatives, requesting that Jesus heal the servant at a distance. Similar to Luke 6:6, in Matthew’s account we read, “The centurion replied, ‘Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof.’” (Matthew 8:8) Why would he say this? Unlike Luke’s portrayal of the centurion, Matthew’s gospel does not take pains to show the centurion’s goodness. The centurion must have sensed that an esteemed religious teacher of Israel should not be seen entering a Gentile home.⁷ Reluctance to having someone come under one’s roof illustrated the cultural divide between the Jews and the Gentiles. This is how the Jews felt. This is how the centurion felt.

Jesus was not to be defined by the cultural expectations for Jew-Gentile relationships. Although Luke’s gospel demonstrates that for Jesus to enter the centurion’s home would have gone beyond Jewish sensibilities, he was certainly prepared to do this very thing. “Jesus’ failure to draw insider-outsider lines, even when faced with possible Gentile defilement (as well as the potential of corpse impurity-cf. v 2), is manifest, first in

⁶ Beasley Murray, *John*, 65.

⁷ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 314.

his intention to enter the centurion's home (v 6) and, second, in his praise of the centurion as an example worthy of emulation (v 9)."⁸The Gospel of Matthew's record of Jesus' words takes his inclusion of the Gentiles in Jesus' view of the kingdom to a different and dramatic new level. "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 8:11)

The "many from the east and west" are pictured here not merely as sharing the residue of Israel's eschatological blessings (eating the crumbs that fall from the children's table, 15:27), but even reclining at the same table as the Hebrew patriarchs who, we are to assume, do not fear ritual defilement by eating with those who do not share Israel's purity. It is not suggested apparently that they come in as proselytes, but they are accepted simply as Gentiles, on equal terms with the patriarchs.⁹

In Matthew 15:21-28 we read that Jesus ministered to a Canaanite woman by healing her daughter of demonic possession. The encounter transpired because of a retreat that Jesus took, and not through a strategic plan to enter the woman's community. Yet faith was at the heart of this miracle as it had been with healing the centurion's servant. Gentiles expressed faith in God for healing. Jesus wanted his followers to witness the faith and learn from it.

The woman's cry for Jesus to help her must have come through a window from outside. (Mark 7:24) His lack of answer prompted the disciples to urge him to do something. The separation between Jews and Gentiles was highlighted by the words of Jesus. "He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.'" (Matthew 15:24) Obviously these would not be Jesus' final words on the subject. "But, like his discouraging silence in v. 23, this conventional Jewish rebuff serves to test the woman's

⁸ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 284.

⁹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 319.

grasp of what her appeal involves. In vv. 27-28 she will rise to the challenge, and the Messiah's mission will be gladly extended."¹⁰

She persisted in her faith by approaching Jesus. She, "...came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said." (Matthew 15:25) Jesus' negative response in Matthew's account has more severity than in Mark 7:24-30. "He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.'" (Matthew 15:26) Her response was humble, yet unrelenting in faith. "'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.'" (Matthew 15:27) Jesus commended her faith and granted her request. "This is the only time in Matthew when faith is qualified as 'great' (though the centurion's faith is favorably compared with any in Israel, 8:10); contrast Peter (14:31) and the other disciples (8:26; cf. 16:8), who have shown 'little faith.'"¹¹ Taken together these two stories give a view to the future that makes for a broader kingdom than the Apostles would have expected to announce. "This woman's insight, no less than the centurion's foreshadows the time when the people of God will include Gentiles equally with Jews on the basis of their faith."¹²

For the message to reach the world it needed messengers. Jesus commanded the apostles to make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:19) "...the bounds of particularism were finally removed. The glory of Christ's resurrection is manifested by His breaking of the power of darkness, not only in a limited region, but through all the world, and by His bringing all nations back to God."¹³ The phrase "all nations" would

¹⁰ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 594.

¹¹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 595-596.

¹² France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 596.

¹³ H.N. Ridderbos, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 554-555.

include the Jews. "The commission is of course to go far beyond Israel, but that does not require that Israel be excluded."¹⁴

The basis for the commission was the authority in heaven and earth that was given to Jesus. The challenge for preaching was found in scripture. An Old Testament prophet's question found in Isaiah 52 would later be addressed by Paul's letter to the Romans. "And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Romans 10:14-15) The problem for messengers was that not all of Israel accepted the gospel. The message, according to Romans 10:18-21 would go out into the whole world, reaching non-Jews living in other nations. The messengers would need a way of communicating to the people of the nations in order to accomplish what Jesus had commanded. They would need an event to catalyze their mission. The event would be the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Commanding the apostles to remain in Jerusalem, Jesus spoke words to prepare them for the Spirit's coming. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) As Jesus experienced following his baptism in Matthew 3, the ministry of the Apostles would proceed from a sign when the Holy Spirit anointed them. "This work would be a work of witness-bearing-a theme which is prominent in the apostolic preaching throughout Acts. An Old Testament prophet had called the people of God to be God's witnesses in the world (Isaiah 43:10; 44:8); the task which Israel had not

¹⁴ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1114.

fulfilled was taken on by Jesus....”¹⁵ The geographical terms of the commission in Acts 1:8 provided an outline for the entire book. “... ‘in Jerusalem’ covers the first seven chapters, ‘in all Judea and Samaria’ covers 8:1 to 11:18, and the remainder of the book traces the progress of the gospel outside the frontiers of the Holy Land until it reaches Rome.”¹⁶

Jews From Every Nation and Language

There were many Jews visiting Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. The disciples were gathered together at the beginning of Acts 2. We read, “Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.” (Acts 2:5) The number of Jews living outside Israel in the first century A.D. was substantial. Between 40,000 and 60,000 Jews lived in Rome at the beginning of the century.¹⁷

The Jews from many nations spoke many languages so they needed to hear in a language they all understood. The expression “every nation” in verse five is a form of hyperbole, but the story in chapter two goes on to enumerate in verses nine and ten exactly what nations were in Jerusalem for Pentecost. There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, along with citizens of Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya and Rome, Cretans and Arabs. The visitors from Rome constituted the only group from Europe included in the list. “Luke is interested in Rome because it is the goal toward which his narrative is moving.”¹⁸ Many language groups and dialects were represented, and the Holy Spirit enabled the Apostles

¹⁵ F.F. Bruce, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 36.

¹⁶ Bruce, *Acts*, 36.

¹⁷ F.F. Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 30.

¹⁸ Bruce, *Acts*, 57.

to speak in the tongues of the people present. From Galilean lips the gospel had begun its journey to new languages. We can imagine these Hellenized and Judaic Jews from Egypt, Libya, Crete and Arab nations: “Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’” (Acts 2:12) God was about to speak and He had the attention of the God-fearing Jews. “...the tongues in 2:4 are best understood as ‘languages’ and should be taken in accord with Philo’s reference to understandable language as one of the three signs of God’s presence in the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. (De Decalogo).”¹⁹

Thousands gathered at once and heard the gospel message. “...a crowd came together in bewilderment...” (Acts 2:6) How many people were listening to Peter is uncertain. Estimates of how many people would be in Jerusalem vary. But as the chapter comes to a close we read of 3000 who responded. It was a big group. “Then Peter stood up and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.’” (Acts 2:14) They were addressed as two separate groups but later they would be referred to in verse 22 as “Men of Israel,” and verse 29 as “Brothers.”

The Holy Spirit Empowered the Communication Process

The Holy Spirit had manifested in tongues so that all heard the wonders of God in their own language. “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:3-4) Those who had gathered

¹⁹ Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 271.

recognized the Galileans speaking neither Greek nor a Jewish language, but the languages from the nations in which they had been living:

Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by people of Jerusalem as being provincial (cf. Mark 14:70). Therefore, since the disciples who were speaking were Galileans, it bewildered those who heard because the disciples could not by themselves have learned so many different languages.²⁰

What would God's motivation be for a sign like this? "On the present occasion the content of the ecstatic utterances was 'the mighty deeds of God' (v. 11), and the range of the languages in which these were proclaimed suggests that Luke thought of the coming of the Spirit more particularly as a preparation for the worldwide presentation of the gospel."²¹

The Holy Spirit was a subject of the message and the preaching of Peter. He quoted from the prophet Joel, saying, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people." (Acts 2:17) When Peter applied the prophet's words about the age they were in to the ministry of Jesus he preached of the power which accompanied him in miracles, wonders and signs. He then spoke of what he had seen happen through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The disciples were all witnesses of what had happened in Jesus' life. "The disciples' direct and real experience of Jesus and his resurrection qualifies them as witnesses, but the Spirit will give them the capability to articulate their experience with boldness."²²

Peter clarified that the Spirit was poured out on the Apostles by Jesus that day. (Acts 2:33) He climaxed the message by indicating that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was a promised gift for the individual listeners if they would repent and be baptized.

²⁰ Longenecker, *Acts*, 272.

²¹ Bruce, *Acts*, 53.

²² Darrell Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 64.

(Acts 2:38) The Holy Spirit empowered the preaching and impacted the listeners.

“Their fearlessness in proclaiming the gospel demands an adequate explanation and no approach to the resurrection is tenable which does not account for this transformation.”²³

“When the people heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37) “...[I]t was through the apostolic preaching of God’s Word in the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that the people of God became the Spirit-filled Body of Christ.”²⁴

A Universal Message Addressed Jews from Every Nation

The Need of Everyone

They all had a common problem; they needed forgiveness of sin, salvation, and eternal life. Everyone participated in the crucifixion of Jesus. Acts 2:23, 2:36, and Romans 3:9-18 are passages that establish the common plight of Gentiles and Jews who were under the judgment of God. Jesus was appointed Lord and Christ over all. (Acts 2:36) When Peter proclaimed in his Pentecost sermon that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ he established that the resurrection proved his title and position. Of what was Jesus Lord? His address of Israel in v. 36 makes it clear that Jesus was Lord of Israel as a nation. Secondly, “The term ‘Lord’ in this context shows in particular Jesus’ lordship over salvation and the distribution of salvation’s benefits.”²⁵ Thirdly, “The promise is for all who are far off-for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Philippians 2:10-11 makes it clear that Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth; in other words He is Lord

²³ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 377.

²⁴ John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 110.

²⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 136.

over all of creation. Therefore, “The theological premise of Acts is that Jesus is Lord of all, and so the gospel can go to all.”²⁶

The Cross Met Their Need for Forgiveness

Luke had closed his gospel with the record of Jesus’ words on how the plan of salvation was rooted in scripture. “He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ (Luke 24:46-47)” The Apostles were witnesses of Jesus’ death and of the words he proclaimed concerning its power over sin.

Listeners representing the nations at Pentecost had their need met by Jesus; his death on the cross paid for their sins. Acts 2:38 underscores that it is through Jesus the listeners could have forgiveness of their sins. Verse 39 indicates that the forgiveness of sins was a promise that extended beyond them “to all who are far off.” This can be understood as referring to people of later generations, a reference to time, and people who are far away, a reference to space, including the Gentiles. “Peter’s words echo two prophetic passages-Isaiah 57:19 (‘Peace, peace to the far and to the near says the Lord) and Joel 2:32 where the words quoted in verses 17-21 above are continued thus: ‘for in Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those who the Lord calls.’”²⁷ When Paul would later quote Isaiah 57:19, it would give evidence that Jews and Gentiles were brought to peace through the same cross. (Ephesians 2:16-17)

²⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 759.

²⁷ Bruce, *Acts*, 71.

The Message Was Accepted

Three thousand listeners responded by accepting the message, repenting and being baptized. “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’”(Acts 2:40) “The sense of the verb in *he warned them* is to testify to the truth while protesting against false views that stood in the way of accepting it(cf. 8:25; 10:42;18:5; 20:21, 24; 23:11; 28:23).”²⁸ Dunn ties this to warnings issued to Israel in Psalm 78:8 and Deuteronomy 32:5, reminding us of how difficult it was to understand the truth when living in the midst of a generation of people who fail to hear God’s voice.²⁹ The warnings of verse 40 signify that the message would not be changed for the hearers. “What we have here is the vision of an evangelist-a vision that is all too often lost as the gospel is acclimated to the world and the world to the church.”³⁰ The message they accepted resulted in their salvation and led them to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:41)

The gospel message from this day forward contained a core of assertions. All Jews from every nation needed to hear this one message referred to as the *kerygma*. All Gentiles would need to hear the same message in the future. F.F. Bruce refers to four points in the *kerygma* message preached by Peter that resulted in repentance and faith by three thousand people: (1) the announcement of the age of fulfillment, (2) a summary of the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, (3) a description of how Old Testament prophecy proves Jesus is the expected Messiah, and (4) a call to repentance and faith.

²⁸ David J. Williams, *New International Bible Commentary: Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers), 55.

²⁹ James Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 34.

³⁰ Longenecker, *Acts*, 286.

“These four elements are present in Peter’s proclamation here.”³¹ Drawing from C. H.

Dodd, Darrell Bock enumerates the following six points in Peter’s sermon:

1. The age of fulfillment has come.
2. It has come through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
3. The resurrection exalted Jesus.
4. The Holy Spirit is the sign of the Church’s power.
5. The messianic age comes in Jesus’ return.
6. God calls for repentance and offers forgiveness, the Holy Spirit and his promise.³²

With these elements on full display from Acts 2:14-39, Bock observes that in his preaching on the day of Pentecost Peter understood that the pouring out of the Spirit was for all ages, genders and classes. Peter would one day know it is for all the nations and tongues as well.³³ Paul would later write that it would signify our unity. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (I Corinthians 12:13) “The baptism of the Spirit is the act of the Holy Spirit joining together into a spiritual unity people of diverse racial extractions and diverse social backgrounds so that they form the body of Christ-the ekklesia.”³⁴

Peter Preached across Cultures to Those Seeking God

Jesus had commanded the Apostles to preach in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

The stoning of Stephen, recorded in Acts 7:59-8:1, gave rise to a general and ruthless persecution of the church, causing its members to be geographically scattered. (Acts 8:1-26) One who left Jerusalem during that persecution was Philip. Another of the

³¹ Bruce, Acts, 63.

³² Bock, *Acts*, 111.

³³ Bock, *Acts*, 113.

³⁴ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 347.

Hellenistic servants from chapter 6, Philip became an evangelist by the leading of the Holy Spirit. He preached publicly in a Samaritan city, resulting in miracles and conversions. Philip preached Christ to a people who were looking for a Messiah. Longenecker explains, “Undoubtedly he used Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19 as a major testimonium passage in his preaching, as Peter and Stephen had done. With the Pentateuch as their Scriptures, and looking for the coming of a Mosaic Messiah, the Samaritans were open to Philip’s message.”³⁵

Peter in Samaria

The establishment of the gospel message in Samaria was a big change for the Jerusalem Church to accept. Word traveled to the apostles in Jerusalem and they sent Peter and John to where Philip was preaching. (Acts 8:14) Philip witnessed the power of the Spirit transferred to converts through the laying on of hands by Peter and John. Whatever reservations the Jerusalem Church may have had about the ministry of a Hellenistic preacher would have been mitigated by the first-hand witness of their leading Apostles. “In effect, therefore, in this first advance of the gospel outside the confines of Jerusalem, God worked in ways that were conducive not only to the reception of the Good News in Samaria but also to the acceptance of these new converts by believers in Jerusalem.”³⁶ The Apostles left Philip and journeyed through many Samaritan villages, preaching the gospel, before returning to Jerusalem.

³⁵ Longenecker, *Acts*, 357.

³⁶ Longenecker, *Acts*, 359.

Peter in Caesarea

Peter's cross cultural preaching experience in Acts 8 was a preliminary step for the cross-cultural preaching he would do in the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. Two concurrent messages created the necessity for Peter to take this journey. One was a vision Cornelius received in Caesarea while praying. God told him, "Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." (Acts 10:5-6) The other took place while Peter was in Joppa. During a time of prayer Peter fell into a trance. Peter was commanded in a vision to eat unclean animals. When he refused he heard a voice say, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." (Acts 10:15) The presentation of the animals and the exchange of dialogue took place three times. While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit spoke to him. "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." (Acts 10:19-20)

When Peter came to Caesarea he went to the house of Cornelius and preached a message that demonstrated that God accepts people from all nations. Using a word for favoritism that appears here for the first time in New Testament, "Peter expresses his realization that God will accept anybody of any race who reverences him and lives righteously."³⁷ This statement would be repeated in Acts 15 and in 1 Peter 1.³⁸ When Peter addressed the household of Cornelius, he told the Gentile audience that "God shows no favoritism." (Acts 10:34) When he later repeated this thought in a slightly different wording at the Jerusalem Council Peter spoke in favor of admitting the Gentiles to membership in the church. He said that God "made no distinction between us and them."

³⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *Acts* (Leicester, UK: Intervarsity Press, 1980), 198.

³⁸ Simon J. Kistemaker, "Speeches In Acts," *Criswell Theological Review*, 36.

(Acts 15:9) Finally, Peter wrote that God "impartially judges each man's work." (1 Pet. 1:17)

Cornelius and his household were filled with the Spirit and were baptized in Jesus' name. While Peter spoke of the offer of forgiveness in Jesus' name the Holy Spirit came on Cornelius and his household. We read of a watershed moment in cross-cultural ministry. "The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God." (Acts 10:46) Consequently the household of Cornelius underwent baptism. It is significant that Peter remained in the home in Caesarea for several days, according to verse forty-eight. In this enormous change of his worldview Peter was building a relationship and making personal a gospel that was individual. It was critical to show that this was not simply a momentary spiritual transaction but the beginning of a relationship in which two disparate groups would become co-heirs of eternal riches in Christ. They were citizens of the same kingdom. "His acceptance of Gentile hospitality gave practical expression to the theological truth he had preached (vv. 34ff)."³⁹

So important was this story that the writer of Acts presents Peter explaining his Spirit-led actions in the subsequent chapter. His behavior was questioned because he went into the home of uncircumcised men and ate with them. (Acts 11:3) Peter told the story of his vision and the Spirit's words telling him to visit Cornelius. Mention of the six witnesses reminds the reader that in the Jewish legal system evidence is established by the testimony of more than one person. Peter's explanation climaxed with the description of how the Holy Spirit came to the household of Cornelius. Peter's defense

³⁹ Williams, *New International Biblical Commentary: Acts*, 197.

can be summarized by the question: “So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?” (Acts 11:17) The systematic coming of the Holy Spirit by extension was strategic, says George Ladd. “...there is but one ekklesia into which all converts, Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, or followers of John, are baptized by the same Spirit.”⁴⁰

Shifting Soils

Acts 11 presents the expansion of the gospel to Antioch, thereby showing how it moves from one soil to another, pushing the boundaries of the people. In Acts 11:19 we read that the message went out to Jews. But in the very next verse we read that a paradigm shift occurred. “Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.” (Acts 11:20-21) Those who spoke are unnamed but the message is clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ. “Hand,” according to Calvin, indicates power and strength. Therefore, Luke means that God has helped the evangelists preach effectively to the Gentiles, calling them to share the grace of Christ along with the Jews. This helped to reassure everybody that God from heaven would bless their efforts.⁴¹ Saul was found in Tarsus by Barnabas and brought over to Antioch to help him with the church there. (Acts 11:25) “So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” (Acts 11:26)

⁴⁰ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 347.

⁴¹ John Calvin, *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries: The Acts of the Apostles*, Volume 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), 193.

What else in the vernacular was changing? “Only when the gospel moved out from Jewish soil to a Gentile milieu did Jesus begin to be thought of as Lord.”⁴²

In Hellenistic soil the gospel message that had once been proclaimed as the good news of the Kingdom, and that later proclaimed Jesus as judge of the living and the dead, was now into a new stage of development, proclaiming Jesus as Lord. He is called Lord five times in Acts 11:20-24. Although it included the Jewish message which Peter imparted to the household of Cornelius, it “...must also have meant so much more to heathen minds, and had connotations quite different from anything contemplated by Jewish-Christian preachers.”⁴³ What words and metaphors would translate the unchanging content of the message into non-Jewish minds? From Acts and the epistles of Paul we may readily observe key ideas emerging through the use of words like “Lord,” “salvation,” and “adoption.”⁴⁴ These were concrete expressions that put converts into a new status, a new citizenship. They were to have a new King. The prior perception of God was strikingly different in the minds of ancient people who were not Jewish. God was someone to fear and a force to appease. Yet the evangelists were proclaiming a God who needed nothing from men and was the giver of all good things. How profound for the learned and religious of that day to hear that there is one God who was more interested in caring for his creation than inhabiting their temples and receiving their gifts. But of what interest was this to the common man? The message and the ministry found them at their deepest level of need. “But perhaps the greatest single factor which appealed to the man in the street was deliverance, deliverance from demons, from Fate,

⁴² Ladd, *New Testament Theology*, 340.

⁴³ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 115.

⁴⁴ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 116-117.

from magic.”⁴⁵ “Jesus Christ was Lord; and in his joyful faith in Christus victor the ordinary man of the ancient world found a deliverance through Christianity which he could not find anywhere else.”⁴⁶

Adapting the Method without Adapting the Message

When Paul presented Jesus to the Gentiles he adapted the method without adapting the message. The first trip to Galatia is a story that is told in Acts 13-14. At some time after their return from delivering famine relief to Jerusalem, Saul and Barnabas became the focus of prayer. Although the reference is not specifically made to preaching and evangelism, God guided the believers of Antioch with these words: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:2) When the reader looks back to God’s words for Ananias in Acts 9:15, it confirms the special role that God had intended for Saul all along. Calvin comments: “Therefore, these words meant that this was the time when Paul must preach the gospel among the Gentiles who were previously estranged from the kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:14). If he had been this sort of teacher from the beginning, he would not have been called by men on this occasion.”⁴⁷ The city of Antioch had a strategic status. “For with its mix of race and culture, it was ready-made for breaking down the dividing wall of hostility....”⁴⁸ As for the missionaries, “The relationship with Antioch was special. “The church regarded them as its representatives and commissioners; it was their home base,

⁴⁵ Green, *Evangelism in the Local Church*, 123.

⁴⁶ Green, *Evangelism in the Local Church*, 125.

⁴⁷ John Calvin, *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries: The Acts of the Apostles* Volume 6, 208.

⁴⁸ Williams, *New International Commentary: Acts*, 203.

and they in due course returned to report ‘all that God had done with them’ (Acts 14:27).”⁴⁹ So where would they go?

The First Trip To Galatia

Acts 13 records the series of cities visited by the missionaries, beginning with Seleucia, Cyprus and Salamis, a place where, it is said, “... they proclaimed the word of God.” (Acts 13:5) Because of their practice of speaking first in a synagogue, one can be confident that Aramaic would be the primary language of communication among Jews. In Paphos the missionaries encountered a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was an attendant to the procounsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man who wanted to hear the message brought by Barnabas and Saul. The false prophet tried to turn away Sergius Paulus from the missionaries and was met with a strong rebuke from Saul, also called Paul. These verses give indications of a change taking place in Saul. Luke uses verse 9 to indicate that Saul had a Roman name, Paul, and then uses the name Paul exclusively in all future narratives. “His preaching to Sergius Paul may have brought home to him that he had moved into a different world, and the change of name may have expressed his growing perception of what God would have him do in it.”⁵⁰ Paul spoke with a spiritual power that moved him to confront the adversary as an instrument of Satan. “You are a child of the devil....Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10) What is also notable about his preaching is that Paul is doing the majority of the speaking, and from this point forward his name will come first when the missionaries are described by the author. “The change indicates that Paul is becoming the prominent and

⁴⁹ Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 160.

⁵⁰ Williams, *New International Bible Commentary: Acts*, 227.

leading member of the group.”⁵¹ With the preaching encounter we witness the messenger’s ability to adapt the message to the audience. Referring to Bar-Jesus and Sergius, Bock observes, “They are two kinds of people who are outside the faith: one strenuously objected to it, and one is more neutral or open and needs to learn the first things about the faith. Paul adopts two different styles to suit the two types.”⁵²

From Paphos, the missionaries traveled to Perga and then to Pisidian Antioch. Acts 13:16-41 presents a lengthy sermon preached by Saul, now Paul (Acts 13:9), in the synagogue of this community. “Paul’s exhortation takes the form of a historical retrospect, as Stephen’s defense did.”⁵³ The elements of verses 17-22 display God’s redemptive acts in Israel’s history. “These events, in fact, constitute an Old Testament *kerygma* which is summarized in Paul’s address as a prelude to the New Testament *kerygma*: the events proclaimed in the apostolic preaching are shown to have taken place as the inevitable sequel to God’s dealings with his people in ancient days.”⁵⁴ Strikingly similar to the sermon preached by Peter in Acts 2, this message called for a response to the offer of forgiveness and justification through trusting in Jesus Christ.⁵⁵ It met with interest among both the Jews and the many proselytes. “During the following week, the Gentiles who had heard Paul’s address spread the news through the city to such good purpose that on the next Sabbath a great crowd of Gentiles turned up at the synagogue.”⁵⁶ Although many people welcomed the message, “...the majority, and especially their leaders, had no use for a salvation which was open to Gentiles on the same terms as

⁵¹ Bock, *Acts*, 445.

⁵² Bock, *Acts*, 447.

⁵³ Bruce, *Acts*, 253.

⁵⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, 254.

⁵⁵ Bruce, *Acts*, 261-262.

⁵⁶ Bruce, *Acts*, 265.

Jews.”⁵⁷ Paul’s straightforward response established the pattern for much of his ministry when he said, “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life we now turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46)

To the Gentiles the message came, city by city. In Iconium Paul and Barnabas spoke first in the synagogue with great success, but their opposition sent them away. “The preaching was attended by miraculous signs, of a kind which confirmed its truth in the minds of the people.”⁵⁸ It was a message of grace, according to verse three, that was spoken boldly. A great multitude believed, both Jew and Hellenist, according to verse one. They left Iconium for surrounding areas to “preach the good news.” (Acts 14:7) A miracle accompanied the preaching in Lystra. Paul saw a lame man crippled from birth who had faith to be healed. Paul “...called out, ‘Stand up on your feet!’ At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.” (Acts 14:10) The crowd shouted in the Lycaonian language, ‘The gods have come down to us in human form.’” (Acts 14:11) Believing their visitors were none other than Zeus and Hermes, the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas who, when they heard of this, made an abrupt change in their preaching. According to Martin Dibelius the speech that followed was leaning on the Septuagint and was preached in an Old Testament style.⁵⁹ He was asking the people of Lystra to turn from “... the worthless things to the living God who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.” (Acts 14:15) The use of nature and creation as a starting point would be repeated in future messages to people who were not Jewish in background. How God felt about Gentiles became an important topic of such messages. Paul proclaimed, “In the past, he let all nations go their own way.” (Acts 14:16) “In these

⁵⁷ Bruce, *Acts*, 265.

⁵⁸ Bruce, *Acts*, 271.

⁵⁹ Bruce, *Acts*, 276.

speeches the point is that, until the full revelation of God came to the Gentiles, he overlooked their errors which arose through ignorance of his will.”⁶⁰

Opposition from Jewish visitors to Lystra brought about the stoning of Paul. Remarkably still alive, Paul and the other missionaries returned to the city before journeying to Derbe. In Derbe the preaching of the good news won a large number of disciples. The journey took them through Pisidia to the region of Pamphylia where they preached in a town called Perga. A stop in Attalia put them at a seaport from which the two missionaries returned to Antioch. What took place in this sending congregation was the report by Paul and Barnabas of all that had happened. Antioch was now the missionary center of the Church. “They had gone out under divine ordination, and their report stressed the fact that God himself had brought about the new policy for evangelizing the Gentiles, which was inaugurated at Paphos and followed throughout the cities of southern Galatia—a claim that was called into question by some believers in Jerusalem and was soon to be tested at the Jerusalem Council.”⁶¹

The Jerusalem Council: Acts 15

“The Council of Jerusalem is an event to which Luke attaches the highest importance; it is as epoch-making, in his eyes, as the conversion of Paul or the preaching of the gospel to Cornelius and his household.”⁶² The Jerusalem Council brought about a clarification of the message being preached by Paul and Barnabas. Acts 15:7-11 provide Peter’s testimony of how God poured out the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles to demonstrate they had heard the message and believed it. Since no distinction was made by God, why

⁶⁰ Bruce, *Acts*, 277.

⁶¹ Longenecker, *Acts*, 439.

⁶² Bruce, *Acts* 282.

should an extra step in the process, circumcision, be required of the Gentiles? “We believe it is through the grace of Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” (Acts 15:11) To a silent assembly, Paul and Silas spoke of God’s miraculous signs and wonders among the Gentiles. “The mind of God is this matter, decisively shown in the house of Cornelius, had been further displayed in the blessing he had bestowed on Gentile believers in Antioch and in their recent mission in Cyprus and Asia Minor.”⁶³

In Acts 15:16-17 James quoted the prophet Amos to identify the Gentiles who have responded to the gospel with the returning exiles. He was seeing the Gentiles coming to faith as the age Jesus had ushered in. “It is this understanding of Amos’ message, James insisted, that Peter’s testimony has affirmed, the result being that the conversion of Gentiles in the last days should be seen not as proselytizing but in an eschatological context.”⁶⁴ James’s conclusion was that the Christians in Jerusalem should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who were coming to faith. To make this communication process clear James resolved that a letter should be written to Gentile believers, including social requirements. They were asked to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. (Acts 15:20-21)

The Letter to the Galatians

The letter Judas, Silas, Paul and Barnabas took from the Jerusalem Council to believers in Antioch was not the only important letter Gentile believers would receive from God. Paul, as apostle, wrote a letter to the churches in Galatia which clarified the

⁶³ Bruce, *Acts*, 291.

⁶⁴ Longenecker, *Acts*, 446.

gospel as a gospel of grace. “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26-28)

Why was it necessary to write to the Galatians? The hearts of the Galatian Christians were being impacted by persons who were altering the message from a gospel of grace to a gospel of works. “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.” (Galatians 1:6-7) Who were these people causing confusion? These individuals were teaching that Gentile Christians who were uncircumcised were not of the same spiritual family as Jewish Christians. “We take the Galatian agitators to be Jewish Christians who adopted a rigorist attitude toward Gentile Christians and sought to impose upon them circumcision and observance of the law as conditions necessary for salvation or-what amounts to the same thing – for a full Christian status.”⁶⁵

People who have come to God through faith in Jesus Christ are members of one family. We “...share his new life, not defined in terms of fleshly identity, that is, of Jewish ethnicity, but in terms of the Messiah’s own new life, a life in which all nations can share equally.”⁶⁶ Since God has one family rather than two, the letter to the Galatians establishes the unifying effect of faith. “The doctrine of justification by faith

⁶⁵ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle To The Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 7-8.

⁶⁶ N.T. Wright, *Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 113.

was born into the world as the key doctrine underlying the unity of God's renewed people."⁶⁷

The letter to the Galatians demonstrates the gospel message was not adapted or changed by Paul and missionaries with whom he traveled. The force of the argument is precipitated by how quickly some of the Galatian Christians were turning from the gospel of grace. The letter to the Galatians twice states that preaching a different gospel should result in the messenger being accursed. "As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned." (Galatians 1:9) "The severity of the anathema is thus the measure of the significance which Paul attaches to the principle of righteousness by faith: for if any teaching at variance with the original apostolic preaching involves the messenger in the divine wrath, then only the message of justification by faith is the divinely sanctioned message...."⁶⁸ Barclay summarizes the argument well, saying, "...the important thing was not what we could do for ourselves but what God had done for us."⁶⁹

Preaching to the Athenians

When Paul preached salvation in Jesus to the Athenians he adapted the method without changing the message. The message was shaped through Paul preaching in a meeting of the Aeropagus. Acts 17:17 indicates that he began not in preaching but in conversation that reasoned/argued (*dialogesthai*).⁷⁰ He preached in the synagogue and

⁶⁷ Wright, *Paul*, 113.

⁶⁸ Fung, *The Epistle To The Galatians*, 48.

⁶⁹ William Barclay, *The Letter To The Galatians and Ephesians* (Louisville, KY: The Westminster Press, 1975), 9.

⁷⁰ Green, *Evangelism in the Local Church*, 160.

with those who passed by the Agora, the center of Athenian social interaction.⁷¹ Paul's words were so compelling he was summoned to make a formal speech. The Athenians were interested in the new teaching. (Acts 17:19-20) "The second phrase refers to foreign things (*enionta*), which is what the resurrection would be for Greeks. So they ask to hear more. The combination of the new and the unknown spark curiosity."⁷²

Paul preached a message comparing the gospel to the belief systems of Greek Philosophers. It was a thoroughly biblical message. "His argument is firmly based on biblical revelation; it echoes throughout the thought, and at times the very language, of the Old Testament. Like the biblical revelation itself, his argument begins with God the creator of all and ends with God the judge of all."⁷³ "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else." (Acts 17:24-25)

From the doctrine of God Paul proceeded to the doctrine of man. Utilizing phrases from Greek poetry Paul placed man in a dependent relationship with God. "For in him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) This was drawn "...from the fourth line of a quatrain attributed to Epimenides the Cretan."⁷⁴ "We are his offspring." (Acts 17:28) This was taken from the Poem on Natural Phenomena by "Paul's fellow-Cilician Aratus, a poet deeply influenced by Stoicism."⁷⁵ But the Stoics were only part of his audience in Athens. Paul's audience was also partly Epicurean. "...Paul is not saying here that people can find God solely by following their felt needs and aspirations. They

⁷¹ Bruce, *Acts*, 329.

⁷² Bock, *Acts*, 563.

⁷³ Bruce, *Acts*, 335.

⁷⁴ Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 242.

⁷⁵ Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 242.

need the gospel, which alone truly fulfills those needs and aspirations.”⁷⁶ God will not be discovered through nature alone. There needs to be revelation.⁷⁷ Creation should show us that temples and man-made Gods are inadequate representations of God. “The theology behind this idea is that humanity is made in the divine image, which means that human beings are living, animated, conscious beings, not objects like idols. So God must be the same and more.”⁷⁸ Paul hoped for a response of faith. The closing is reminiscent of Acts 14:15 with its call to turn from the worship of idols.

Several believed the message and became followers of Jesus Christ. From the assertions that we are the offspring of God, Paul called on the men of Athens to repent. A day of judgment awaited them by the man God had appointed. “He has given proof of this to all by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31) The sermon essentially told of three things. It explained the origin of life, the meaning of life and the end of life.⁷⁹ It left the audience divided, but a few men became followers because of the Holy Spirit at work in the power of Paul’s appropriate use of rhetoric.

There are a variety of opinions about the effectiveness of Paul’s sermon in Athens. Some scholars like Bornkamm have suggested that it failed.⁸⁰ Some have argued that a greater number of people would have come to faith had Paul not made the resurrection of Jesus his final point. But preaching was not a matter of expediency. “There was a content of preaching that must be determined by the gospel, understood as concentrated upon its central figure; but there was also a strategy of preaching, and the

⁷⁶ Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.1998), 481.

⁷⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 567.

⁷⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 569.

⁷⁹ Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World*, 110.

⁸⁰ Gunther Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), 67.

strategy had, in Paul's view, to be determined not by considerations of expediency but by the gospel itself."⁸¹ The message was unchanging.

An Unchanging Message Was Powerfully Delivered

In Acts 18-20 we read how the unchanging message of the gospel was powerfully delivered. Corinth and Ephesus were central locations for sermons to be preached. While the audiences for the gospel message were ever changing, the message remained the same. In Athens Paul used an approach that drew from his knowledge of philosophy. He built a bridge to his intellectual audience by quoting poetry and arguing through the use of wisdom. In Corinth Paul consciously omitted words of eloquence to rely on the Holy Spirit's power to persuade. With power the words were transmitted through wholly surrendered lives.

Direction and Power from the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit directed the messengers to people and empowered the preaching of the unchanging message. A message that utilized expressions of philosophy was increasingly a message that relied on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would transform their words and imbue their preaching with power from on high. "The Spirit was given to make them missionaries and proclaimers of the good news."⁸² Paul confessed his reliance upon God's Spirit "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might

⁸¹ C.K. Barrett, *Paul: An Introduction to His Thought* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 53.

⁸² John R. W. Stott, *The Spirit, The Church and the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 29-45.

not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power." (1 Corinthians 2:4-5) This spiritual power exerted its force over principalities and powers. "What Jesus had begun to do then, he was continuing now through his Apostles. You do not need many healed cripples to amaze the authorities!"⁸³

The force of this transformation may be witnessed clearly in Acts 18 when Paul worked alongside Aquila and Priscilla as a tentmaker in Corinth. We read of his efforts to persuade Jews and Greeks in verse 4 and then witness an abrupt change in verse 5. "When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." (Acts 18:5) "Luke's description of this new phase is a striking one. NIV gives the sense of it, but the actual expression is that Paul 'was seized by the message,' as though it had overpowered him and he was no longer master of when he would preach but the servant of a message...."⁸⁴

Paul would go on to talk about how he was compelled by the Spirit to preach. In Acts 20:22-24 he testified that the transforming force has made his life, "worth nothing to me." (Acts 20:24) To the Corinthians he would write that he was compelled to preach, whether for reimbursement or voluntarily. (1 Corinthians 9:15-18) The goal was the winning of souls, for which Paul said he would do all things. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Communities and Cultures Transformed by the Message

The Holy Spirit's power in the message transformed the communities and cultures where it was heard and received. Preaching was persuasion. The word *peithein* (Acts 17:4; 18:4; 19:8, 26; 28:23, 24) is used to describe the preaching that asks people to

⁸³ Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World*, 66.

⁸⁴ Williams, *New International Bible Commentary: Acts*, 314.

change and believe the truth being proclaimed.⁸⁵ What change or changes were people persuaded to make? The most appropriate word to describe this change was “repentance.” John the Baptist had commanded people to “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” (Luke 3:8) “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’” (Mark 1:14-15) New Testament preaching was always persuading people to change by turning from sin and turning to God. Communities like Thessalonica and Corinth were later transformed by the changes in the residents who accepted the gospel. A powerful example is illustrated by converts burning scrolls used for sorcery in Ephesus. (Acts 19:19-20) “This rejection of magic and the burning of these manuals of magic are a major public statement about a change of direction in life.”⁸⁶

New Messengers Were Empowered to Preach an Unchanging Message

The gospel was always an ongoing message. The gospel was larger than any one of its messengers and would need to be preached in the generations to follow the apostles. Individuals like Timothy and Titus would follow Peter, Barnabas, Paul and Silas in proclamation of the message. Paul asked Timothy to provide pastoral leadership for the church in Ephesus. (I Timothy 1:3-7) Preachers from a Gentile background would be instrumental in the gospel taking root in cross cultural situations. It would be preached by people such as Timothy, a half Greek and Titus, a Greek, who had been impacted and

⁸⁵ Watson, *I Believe in Evangelism*, 47.

⁸⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 605.

trained through the first wave of preachers with powerful words by Paul. “You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1)

Guided by the Holy Spirit, missionaries like Paul had been intentional in preserving the gospel message in its original content. The strategic return of the missionaries to Lystra and Iconium in Acts 14 provided a strengthening of the disciples for the future. The second missionary journey was planned in Acts 15:36 to see how the brothers were doing. When the missionaries went again to Lystra they reported of the Jerusalem Council. “The language of handing over the decrees refers to passing on tradition, a more technical use than other instances in Acts (15:26, 40; 1 Corinthians 11:2, 23; 15:3...)”⁸⁷ It was not to be changed.

The message had to be protected from error, spoken either by accident or by a desire for manipulation. Apollos, an up and coming preacher needed mentoring from Aquila and Priscilla to preach more accurately. (Acts 18:24-26) The later effectiveness of his preaching can be observed in the many disciples made for the Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:10-12) What a strong warning Paul issued to the Ephesians when he left them in Timothy’s care. “Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:30) To Timothy Paul would write these words about the message he delivered. “Keep as the pattern of sound teaching....” (2 Timothy 1:13) “Continue in what you have learned....” (2 Timothy 3:14)

Preaching Across the Cultures

The New Testament gives many examples of how people preached the unchanging gospel message of Jesus Christ in primarily one language across cultures.

⁸⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 523-524.

The widespread use of the Greek language gave inroads to preaching. Thoroughly Hellenized by the Greeks, the Romans had been using their language for three centuries in its education.⁸⁸ “Missionaries using it would incur none of the odium that English-speaking missionaries might find in some of the underdeveloped countries, for Greek, the language of the captive people, could not be associated with imperialism.”⁸⁹ Because it had been used for centuries to express philosophical thoughts, the Grecian vocabulary was “... ideally suited for the propagation of a theological message.”⁹⁰

This preaching did not ask potential converts to join an ethnic group, or adopt a set of cultural norms. It compelled listeners to serve the creator God in a new culture, the church of God, which establishes common ground between all people. Disciples of Jesus Christ came together as Churches in their own cities. In many instances those congregations began with a mix of Jews, Proselytes and Gentiles who confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The message preached did not require people who repented and believed to submit to circumcision. It asked them to receive salvation by grace through faith. This put the Apostles at odds with Jews who believed that more should be required of converts than simple belief. But the early evangelists and missionaries would not adjust the message to accommodate these expectations. It was the same message Jesus had preached to the nations He envisaged received it. “...Paul’s pre-eminent contribution to the world has been his presentation of the good news of free grace – as he himself would have put it (rightly), his re-presentation of the good news explicit in Jesus’ teaching and embodied in his life and work.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 16

⁸⁹ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 17.

⁹⁰ Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 34.

⁹¹ Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 18.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Preaching was meant to cross cultures. Jesus said to the disciples, "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Responding to a vision and obeying the words of the Spirit, Peter took that bold step and preached the gospel to Cornelius and his household in Caesarea. After crossing the threshold Peter reminded his listeners that it violated his Jewish cultural law to associate with or visit a Gentile. (Acts 10:28) The Greek word translated Gentile was *allophylos*, "one of a different race." This was a kinder and more sensitive word than *ethne*, which is more frequently used to designate Gentile. This is its only use in all the New Testament.¹ Truly Peter had sensitively crossed a culture for the sake of all who would follow him.

For many centuries missionaries like Peter have crossed geographical boundaries, taking the message of Jesus Christ to different cultures. From what they have learned our preaching to people has improved. Missionaries like Lesslie Newbigin, Donald McGavran, and Charles Kraft have learned how to communicate the word of God more effectively to people in other parts of the world. What these servants have learned might have been limited to the ministries of the missionaries they have taught. But pastors increasingly find that they do not have to cross a geographical boundary to engage in cross cultural preaching. The learned lessons apply to ministry in U.S. churches today.

¹ David Williams, *New International Bible Commentary: Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 197.

Pastors in the U.S. cross cultures every day in the churches and ministries where they serve. One in three Americans has someone of another race in their family. In 2008 14.6 % of newlyweds married someone of another race or ethnicity, a new high.² People are going to be attending churches with multi-cultural families. “Recent demographic changes have brought the world to our doorstep. We do not necessarily have to travel to distant lands to take the gospel to Asians, Latin Americans, Europeans, or Africans. They are right here in our own backyard, our neighborhood, and our community.”³

Communicating effectively across cultures is challenging. James Nieman and Thomas Rogers wrote *Preaching to Every Pew*. For this book they interviewed people who had extensive experience preaching when multiple cultures were present. Their work is the result of interviews with pastors who regularly preach with people coming from a diversity of culture. As a result of escalating immigration since 1965, the U.S. has become increasingly multicultural, bringing noticeable change to ministry in the local church. Nieman and Rogers identify four cultural frames that raise challenges for effective preaching and communicating. Those frames are ethnicity, class, displacement, and beliefs.⁴ It is the frame of ethnicity with which this thesis is most concerned. How can pastors effectively preach with multiple ethnic groups present? How do pastors effectively preach when people are translating from English into their native language while the sermon is being preached?

We who proclaim the gospel will look first at preaching as a form of communication. The intention in the beginning section of this chapter is to establish the

² Pew Research Center, quoted in *Leadership Journal* (Fall 2010), 11.

³ Rajendra K. Pillai, *Reaching the World in Our Own Backyard* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2003), 15.

⁴ James R. Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 16.

components of this process as they are applied to preaching in English to people of multiple language groups. In the following section preaching will be viewed as a cross-cultural task that requires intentional study and preparation. This is not to say that other preaching is without preparation. The systems that are taught in preaching classes today constitute the framework for what is unique in preparing for an audience that consists of many heart languages. If we prepare well it will bridge the gap between the ancient text and the modern listener. If we prepare well it will bridge the gap between the culture of the sender and the culture of the receiver. If not the message will come across as something to observe, admire or wonder at from a distance. In the final section we look at the delivery of a sermon. We will discover the assumptions we may make for a homogenous audience that would diminish the effectiveness of a sermon delivered in a setting with cultural diversity. All through these considerations there is the need for God's Spirit to empower the process – the messenger, the message, the setting, and the receivers of the message. The word is near us because God desires for us to hear it and by its message experience transformation. (Deuteronomy 30:14)

Communication That Is Effective

John Stott says that sermons should build bridges between the ancient world of the Bible and the contemporary world in which we live. "It is because preaching is not exposition only but communication, not just the exegesis of a text, but the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it..."⁵ If we are to build a bridge through the sermon, then what kind of communication does preaching represent?

⁵ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1982), 137.

Before we can identify what kind of communication preaching represents, the person preparing a sermon should think first about the levels on which communication takes place. Communication takes place on many levels, which Myron Chartier organizes in the following way: Intrapersonal communication refers to what goes on inside a person through observation, evaluation, and the meanings ascribed to things and ideas. Interpersonal communication refers to interaction between persons. Organizational communication takes place in structured activities for a system of people accomplishing agreed upon goals. This is the first and most obvious level at which preaching takes place.⁶ But preaching can be found in a variety of other communication levels as well.

Mass communication takes place in public lecture situations and also through various outlets of radio, television, and print media. Intercultural communication, at times occurring on this level, is perhaps the most abstract of all these levels. Chartier observes, "It involves the symbolic interaction between cultures, as well as the impact of a culture upon an individual. It conditions such things as the way people view time, the language they speak, how they go about courtship and marriage, the clothes they wear and the way they worship."⁷ Preaching tends to be found on the mass communication level because a message is being transmitted by one person to many people.

Duane Litfin uses the word "categories" to describe the types of communication. If we think of communication in terms of categories then, according to Litfin, the style of speaking referred to as preaching should be placed among the forms referred to as non-mediated communication. In contrast with non-mediated communication, mediated communication includes all the ways people give and receive messages when a medium

⁶ Myron R. Chartier, *Preaching as Communication: An Interpersonal Perspective* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), 22-23.

⁷ Chartier, *Preaching as Communication*, 23-24.

is involved. Radio, television, film and print are typically classified as mediums. The internet has brought about an infusion of ways information is transmitted. Non-mediated communication, on the other hand, is interpersonal. What Chartier would refer to as preaching, Litfin says belongs to a category of communication that is neither one-to-one, nor group based, but is public address.⁸

From these beginning assertions one arrives at an important question. Can one refer to communication theory when discussing preaching? Is communication the same when having a conversation as it is when preaching? Donald K. Smith indicates that distinctions between interpersonal, small-group and mass communication are increasingly blurred.⁹ Like other forms of communication preaching involves a series of linear components, phases, or steps. The trio made famous by Aristotle was speaker, audience and speech. David Berlo expands on this trio concept by saying, "Communication requires six basic ingredients: a source, an encoder, a message, a channel, a decoder, and a receiver."¹⁰ John Stott seems to agree, but in explaining this process for preaching he distinguishes preaching from broader forms of public address, condensing the series to four ingredients: source, message, code/channel and the receiver. Stott, in chapter two of his book *Between Two Worlds*, contends that the source and encoder (the preacher) are one.¹¹ He also believes that the decoder and the receiver (the congregation) become as one. "Obviously the code is words and the channel is speech."¹² God is speaking his word through the preacher to the people. Since God is

⁸ Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1981), 21-25.

⁹ Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 81.

¹⁰ David Berlo, *The Process of Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 99.

¹¹ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 80.

¹² Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 81.

speaking to people, then a good place to begin understanding the way we should communicate is in careful consideration of the people listening to the sermon.

Audience

Building a bridge implies that something separates the sender of the message from the receiver. The chasm that John Stott describes preaching to bridge is between the ancient and modern worlds.¹³ The modern world is increasingly secular and fails to see the Bible as relevant to their lives. Our mistake has been to remain on the safe side of the gulf that separates us and aim our messages to heaven, expecting the Holy Spirit to apply them. “And if we are called to account for our practice of exposition without application, we piously reply that our trust is in the Holy Spirit to apply his word to the realities of human life.”¹⁴ Charles Kraft places this unfortunate attitude described by Stott in a list of myths. Of his well known ten myths concerning communication, number nine is, “The Holy Spirit will make up for all mistakes if we are sincere, spiritual and prayerful enough.”¹⁵ Rather than make assumptions about God’s Spirit, preachers have a responsibility to their listeners that calls for careful attention to how they communicate.

Charles Kraft is known for his receptor approach to communication. He says that “Every communicational activity involves a gap and a bridge. A communicational gap always exists between human beings, and those who seek to interact with them....To cross such a gap a communicational bridge is needed.”¹⁶ Kraft contends this approach was present in the incarnation of Jesus. It is a primary assumption that preaching places a

¹³ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 139.

¹⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 140.

¹⁵ Charles Kraft, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 36.

¹⁶ Kraft, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*, 3.

high priority on the audience to which we speak. Robinson echoes this with even greater force. “We should forget about speaking to the ages, therefore, and speak to our day. Expository preachers confront people about themselves from the Bible instead of lecturing to them about the Bible’s history or archaeology.”¹⁷ James Engel states it in a similar fashion, asserting that a realistic understanding of the listener is critical. “We must follow the example of Jesus and begin our communication in terms of where people are and not where we would like them to be.”¹⁸ *Where* they are has much to do with *who* they are. For that reason bridge building requires understanding who is listening to preachers.

What kind of people do pastors preach to each week? The question is answered in one way by Keith Willhite through the use of audience grids. “From a communication perspective...*listeners* determine whether the sermon is relevant. We might think that this communication perspective seems contrary to the theological perspective, but the two are quite compatible.”¹⁹ Willhite suggests that grids may place the audience into theological, psychological, and demographic categories. The question to answer is how will preachers apply those grids in terms of dress, style of speaking, language, arguments, and illustrations? The following grid helps to organize the audience.²⁰

¹⁷ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 28.

¹⁸ James Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communication: Its Theory and Practice* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), 287.

¹⁹ Keith Willhite, *Preaching With Relevance: Without Dumbing Down* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 22.

²⁰ Willhite, *Preaching With Relevance: Without Dumbing Down*, 33.

Table 1. AUDIENCE GRIDS

	Home	Work	School	Church	Subculture
Children					
Single					
Married					
Divorced					
Widowed					

The question of who pastors preach to is answered in a different way by Nieman and Rogers. If preachers are to reach everyone in the pews, the authors contend for a careful examination of the cultural frames present in a congregation. Their extensive field research into congregations with cultural diversity uncovered cross-cultural preaching strategies for pastors. The strategies stemmed from the classification of four cultural frames within a congregation. The first is the frame of ethnicity. This frame includes issues of race and language. The second is the frame of class. This frame refers to socio-economic status and the inevitable comparisons between people that occur. The third frame is referred to as displacement. This frame gives preachers a view of people who wrestle with change in their world, experiencing a loss of familiarity, predictability and control. Finally there is the frame of belief. There are religious differences between people and a lack of understanding that keeps them separated.²¹

For example we can easily and effectively speak with family and friends not simply because we share a common language, but more deeply because we share a range of cultural assumptions gained through regular, close contact. Those assumptions reassure us that an expression or gesture will mean for someone else what we intend it to mean. Remove those shared assumptions and uncertainty in communicating increases correspondingly.²²

²¹ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 22-38.

²² Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 16.

A knowledge of who pastors preach to is crucial, but an understanding of what those listeners need is even more crucial. Donald K. Smith reminds the preacher, “It is basic to know the audience, but meeting only their felt needs often ignores deeper spiritual needs.”²³ Rather than exploit listeners the way a marketing technique might use knowledge of an audience, preachers have a higher calling. Smith answers the question of how to bridge the gap between preacher and listener. “With compassion, and a readiness to put our own attitudes toward the audience under the penetrating scrutiny of Christ’s love for that audience. As we gain compassion, we will long to know people as they are.”²⁴ Newbigin adds, “But words are obviously only the most elementary of tools. We can only use them as part of a language which is shaped by the experience of a whole people.”²⁵

Part of knowing the multi-cultural audience is in appreciating the difficulty with which people comprehend the information in a sermon. Joseph Jeter and Ronald Allen remind us that, “Religious language is hard to ‘decode.’”²⁶ Smith observes that for people from other cultures who hear the gospel, “The paper is not blank. The new message is placed on top of messages already heard and believed.”²⁷ Robert Fortner adds, “Words and meanings are personal. They are our property. Meanings are in us, so it’s possible for us to forget them, distort them and change them.”²⁸ With all these challenges before us, can we communicate effectively? Robert Webber, drawing from the writings of Eugene Nida, says, “Yes.” While absolute communication would never take place,

²³ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 122.

²⁴ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 123.

²⁵ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 34.

²⁶ Joseph Jeter and Ronald Allen, *One Gospel, Many Ears* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 119.

²⁷ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 78.

²⁸ Robert Fortner, *Communication, Media and Identity: A Christian Theory of Communication* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, Inc., 2007), 83.

effective communication can always occur among people of different cultural backgrounds for the following reasons:

1. The process of human reasoning is essentially the same, irrespective of cultural diversity.
2. All people have a common range of human experiences.
3. All people possess the capacity for at least some adjustment to the symbolic “grids” of others.²⁹

Language is a gift God has given to us. Language was created by God. He is a speaking God, using language to reveal himself and his plan for his creation. It is the medium the Father first used to spread the good news of his son Jesus Christ. God’s use of language validates our use of language.³⁰

The English language helps to build the bridge of preaching. The expression *lingua franca* refers to a common language used for education and commerce. While different languages have served in this capacity for a region of the world, or a political empire, “There has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English.”³¹ English is to contemporary preaching what Greek was to Apostolic preaching. This is consistent with how Michael Green describes the use of Greek in the early church. “For centuries it had been used to express the reflections of some of the world’s greatest thinkers.”³² Crystal confirms that English has been the global language since 1919 when World War I concluded, and the mandate documents were written in English.³³ Since the 1960s English has become the normal medium of instruction in

²⁹ Robert Webber, *God Still Speaks* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), 87-88.

³⁰ Webber, *God Still Speaks*, 85-86.

³¹ David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 2009), 189.

³² Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2003), 17.

³³ Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 86.

higher education for many nations, and is the typical language in nations where there is no official language.³⁴

Pastors who preach in U.S. churches will increasingly come into contact with people who want to learn English. Worshiping in Christian churches is how some people improve their English. This population is part of the audience pastors will preach to in English, and effective communication will often be difficult. Jeter and Allen encourage pastors to be careful in their use of language. “When we move to religious language, the problems multiply. First, we may find ourselves using archaic or outdated language that has lost its meaning for people today.”³⁵ The problem of any language is when preachers encounter listeners with a cultural context that places a higher emphasis on nonverbal communication than verbal communication. Rajendra Pillai notes that for these people with origins in African, Asian, and Latin America countries, “Gestures, posture, silence and eye-contact all play a significant role in communicating.”³⁶ Intercultural communication expert Carley Dodd agrees. “Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously.”³⁷

Therefore as the English language is used by the pastor for communication, it will need to be handled wisely. Fortner reminds the pastor that communication involves multiple channels simultaneously. “First, it is a symbolic activity involving the use of language. Even when what is communicated occurs without the explicit use of words,

³⁴ Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 112.

³⁵ Joseph Jeter and Ronald Allen, *One Gospel, Many Ears* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 119.

³⁶ Rajendra Pillai, *Reaching the World in Our Own Backyard* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2003), 52.

³⁷ Carley Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication* (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1998), 134-135.

language is involved.”³⁸ English as the *lingua franca* stated well by the Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe. “I feel that English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience.... But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.”³⁹ Pastors can be effective preaching in English to other cultures if they preach the English language well.

Preaching English well will result from a better understanding of the heart language of the members in the audience. Rick Richardson says,

The heart language of Native Americans is the language of spiritual experience and of harmony in relationships and nature. Hispanic culture is family-oriented. Talking about your background, your family and children, speaks to their hearts. "Heart" is communicated in the language itself. I don't know much Spanish, but I use what I can when visiting my friend Pedro Aviles's church.⁴⁰

Message

In order for them to build a bridge to their audience, pastors must preach truth in a way that their audience can understand it. This requires a use of language that is called “contextualization.” David Hesselgrave and Ed Rommen define *contextualization* as “the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as put forth in the teaching of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts.”⁴¹ Bruce J. Nicholls defines it in a slightly different way as “...the translation of the unchanging content of the gospel of the kingdom into verbal forms meaningful to

³⁸ Robert Fortner, *Communication Media and Identity: A Christian Theory of Communication* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, Inc., 2007), 11.

³⁹ Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 184.

⁴⁰ Rick Richardson, *The Intentional Bridge Builder*, Preaching Today, July 1, 2004.

⁴¹ David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods and Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989), 200.

the peoples in their separate cultures and within their particular existential situation.”⁴²

The emphasis on the *unchanging content of the gospel of the kingdom* is important.

Truth is from the Bible; therefore the scriptures are what make for the best form of communication in cross cultural preaching. Does the multi-cultural audience agree? Nieman and Rogers contend that the multi-cultural audience wants to hear the Bible. “It is only natural that ethnic groups who derive the preacher’s authority from Biblical authority would expect the preaching event to be profoundly stamped by scripture.”⁴³ Listeners whose background is in other faiths have books on their shelves in addition to the Bible. The concern for the communication process arises when we wonder how the Bible is considered in comparison to those books that describe Taoism and Confucianism. Regarding using the Bible, Lesslie Newbigin reminds the preacher, “We need to make sure it doesn’t come across as just another book about religion.”⁴⁴

Whether or not the listener will hear the Bible as truth is a problem that C.S. Lewis summarized well. “One of the great difficulties is to keep before the audience’s mind the question of Truth. They always think you are recommending Christianity not because it is true because it is good. And in the discussion they will at every moment try to escape from the issue ‘True – or False’ into stuff about a good society or morals....”⁴⁵ Scott Gibson warns against sermons that make the Bible sound as if it is in agreement with everything else in the world that is taught about God. “Part of maintaining our adherence to the truth demands that we do not reduce Christianity to the lowest common

⁴² Bruce J. Nicholls, “Let The Earth Hear His Voice,” *Theological Education and Evangelization* (Minneapolis, MN: Worldwide, 1975), 647.

⁴³ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 42.

⁴⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 90.

⁴⁵ C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 101.

denominator of pragmatism.”⁴⁶ Reflecting on how one’s culture will filter a change in beliefs, Donald K. Smith summarizes preaching well. “Ultimately the Spirit of God brings recognition of truth. It is the Spirit that gives new birth so that Christ is known within the very core of a person.”⁴⁷ “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)

Messenger

Pastors preach God’s word once it has been preached to them. Haddon Robinson asserts, “As much as we might wish it otherwise, we cannot be separated from the message.”⁴⁸ He adds that, “The audience does not hear a sermon, they hear a person – they hear you.”⁴⁹ Chartier’s words align with Robinson’s describing pastoral self-disclosure when he writes, “Preaching, then, is more than sharing the Christian story. It is also communicating one’s own story, as well as those of others in the community.”⁵⁰ But pastors are not asking people to trust in them or their lives. Kraft says: “We are to be ambassadors for Christ, not ourselves. Our witness is of our experience with God. Our witness is for the sake of others. We are to witness persuasively.”⁵¹

Will truth be found in the preacher’s life so that listeners believe what they are hearing? Stott indicates that the expectations are high. “For preachers are not lecturers, who may discourse on topics remote from their own experience, concern and belief, but

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Arthurs, “The Postmodern Mind and Preaching,” *Preaching To A Shifting Culture*, ed. Scott Gibson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 190.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 264.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 25.

⁴⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 26.

⁵⁰ Chartier, *Preaching as Communication* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), 34.

⁵¹ Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 219.

are personally committed to their message. So preachers must of all people be sincere.”⁵² The messenger has a relationship with the listener and it is of crucial importance. “One way to achieve greater pastoral status is, as we have said earlier, through establishing trust. Our interviewees also added that longer service within an ethnic group produces greater authority, since the length of tenure symbolizes commitment.”⁵³

Communication is found in community. Having things in common is the basis or foundation for communication. Donald Smith reminds us of the etymological connection between the words *communication* and *community*, and declares: “Involvement is inseparable from communication....”⁵⁴ When pastors live in community with their multi-ethnic members, character will be known. As a result of being known, a conduit for truth is established. “Beyond these basic standards, however, pastoral authority is distinctively affected by the link between personal character and the preaching task itself. That is, many ethnic groups view the preacher as a channel of the sacred itself.”⁵⁵ Phillips Brooks referred to preaching as communicating truth through personality. “For Brooks, this meant that the character, emotions, will, thoughts and feelings of the speaker should be on display in every message.”⁵⁶

Communication is the foundation for sermons that build bridges. The listener is reached through a message brought by a thoughtful messenger. That messenger is endeavoring to understand the listener so the listener can understand God. Using an intentional approach in preparing messages for cross-cultural understanding is the key for pastors preaching effective sermons.

⁵² Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 262.

⁵³ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 41.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 24.

⁵⁵ Nieman and Rogers, 41.

⁵⁶ Robert Duffett, *A Relevant Word* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), 120.

Preparing Effective Sermons

There are many ways to prepare a sermon, but the main thing is to prepare it. John Stott asks, “What would we think of a lawyer who enters court to defend his client without having prepared his case?”⁵⁷ Just as a lawyer prepares a case, so the preacher must prepare to preach sermons. A review of authors gives us a clear understanding of what elements in preparation will make for clear preaching in cross-cultural ministry.

The Bible

The Bible is what preachers must preach. “Ultimately the authority behind expository preaching resides not in the preacher but in the biblical text. For that reason expositors deal largely with an explanation of Scripture, so that they focus the listener’s attention on the Bible.”⁵⁸ Nieman and Rogers report that when preaching cross-culturally pastors are most effective when grounded in scripture:

The sense that personal character embodies the text leads us naturally into a second area of preaching expectations in many ethnic groups: the use of scripture. As with the view of the preacher so also the view of the scripture is elevated. The relation between the two is quite close, since pastoral authority in these groups is typically rooted in a scriptural authority that treats the Bible as divine speech and thus unlike any other book. As a consequence, pastors spoke of the need to ground their preached remarks in scriptural references so that both the message and the one speaking it would receive credibility.⁵⁹

Beginning with the Bible establishes the trans-cultural essence of the Christian faith. We can shape the way we present it, but the content is not the possession of any culture. Robert Webber insists, “That is, the fundamental features of Christianity cannot

⁵⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 212.

⁵⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 24.

⁵⁹ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 41.

be dismissed as something belonging to the Semitic culture and therefore dispensable. These truths belong to all cultures.”⁶⁰ This starting point leads the preacher to the inevitable conclusion that communicating Christianity requires a communication of the historic doctrines of the faith that took shape in the New Testament church. These doctrines include the Trinity, Creation, the Fall, Revelation, Incarnation, Redemption, The Church, and the Consummation.⁶¹

Beginning with the Bible establishes the authority of scripture. The high view of scripture does not worship the words.⁶² “In the low view, the Bible has little authority and no infallibility. In fact, the low view provides a convenient philosophical base for a high view of culture. One might say it substitutes the infallibility of cultures for the infallibility of the Bible.”⁶³ Newbigin explains that scripture first tells of our universal history. Then it tells of our place in the story, asking us to be a responsible actor.⁶⁴

Beginning with the Bible addresses the needs of the listeners. “What is needed always and everywhere – and especially in those cultures long separated from God and his Word – is a new and careful attention to the agenda and priorities already divinely set forth in Scripture.”⁶⁵ In other words, if we don’t let the scripture speak we will pick and choose what themes and ideas we want to preach, missing sermons that would have been delivered if we had just preached the whole counsel of God.

⁶⁰ Webber, *God Still Speaks*, 44.

⁶¹ Webber, *God Still Speaks*, 44.

⁶² Donald McGavran, *The Clash Between Christianity and Cultures* (Washington, DC: Canon Press, 1974), 54.

⁶³ McGavran, *The Clash Between Christianity and Cultures*, 56.

⁶⁴ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 90.

⁶⁵ David J. Hesselgrave, “Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* Vol. 14:2 (Apr.-June 1997), 80.

The Listener

Pastors are building a bridge to the listeners so that they may desire change.

Enabling the listener to cross the bridge requires the pastor to understand what the listener will be leaving behind in making a change. "...[I]t is apparent that the 'change of mind' and 'renewing of the mind' involved in biblical conversion and Christian maturation is first and foremost a changed worldview. Whatever terms might be used, worldview change is intrinsic to discipleship."⁶⁶

Every listener has a worldview. What is worldview anyway? "A worldview is a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in faith about the basic makeup of the world and how the world works."⁶⁷ Miller explores these three "archetypal" worldviews and examines a variety of topics by which they view the world. He discusses such categories as time, community, and the economy. The differences are illustrated in the following table, which describes how different worldviews see nature.⁶⁸

Table 2. WORLDVIEWS

	Animism	Theism	Secularism
Ruler	Nature	God	Man
Perspective	Biocentric	Theocentric	Anthrocentric
Nature	Capricious	Open System	Closed System
Man	A Spirit	A Mind	A Mouth
Resources	Limited good	Positive Sum	Zero Sum
Man's role	Worshiper, victim	Steward, regent	Consumer/miner

Preachers must approach their task by considering the epistemological questions addressed differently by these three general ways people see the world. "Epistemological questions concern themselves with the nature, limits and validity of knowledge. 'Is there truth?' 'What can I know?' and 'How can I know?' are examples of the kinds of

⁶⁶ David J. Hesselgrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication," 79.

⁶⁷ Darrow L. Miller, *Discipling Nations* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1998), 36.

⁶⁸ Miller, *Discipling Nations*, 145.

fundamental questions from which all others spring.”⁶⁹ What other questions might the listeners ask as they hear a sermon?

In approaching the preaching task, Darrell Johnson, drawing inspiration from James Sire and N.T. Wright, says that every worldview is asking and trying to answer the following nine questions:

1. What is prime reality? What is “really real?”
2. Who or what are we? What does it mean to be a human being?
3. Is there such a thing as “morality,” right and wrong? If so, what is its basis? How does one know the good and the bad?
4. What is the meaning of history? Or, is there any meaning?
5. What is wrong with us? Something is off-what is it?
6. Is there a solution; can things be fixed? By whom? How? How quickly?
7. Is there a God? If so, can this God be known? And is this God involved in the world, especially relative to human suffering?
8. What happens to a human being at death?
9. What time is it? “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1) Where are we in the flow of history?⁷⁰

Expository preaching begins at the text, rather than the question. Yet once the text has been chosen, questions need to be asked of it for the sake of those who will hear the sermon. Haddon Robinson refers to approaches that pastors take in response to three developmental questions that help a preacher take a text to a sermon. We must explain it: “What does this mean?” We must prove it: “Is it true?” We must apply it: “What difference does it make?”⁷¹ It is in the asking of these questions that preachers begin to organize structure and develop material, creating sermons that connect with listeners. This was the process undertaken by Philip when he met the Ethiopian on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. “Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ Philip asked. ‘How can I,’ he

⁶⁹ Miller, *Discipling Nations*, 36.

⁷⁰ Darrell W. Johnson, *The Glory of Preaching* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 67-68.

⁷¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 77-96.

said, ‘unless someone explains it to me?’” (Acts 8:30-31) The idea for Philip’s approach to evangelism drew from helping the Ethiopian understand the subject of the man suffering in Isaiah’s prophecy.

The Idea

What results from asking questions is a topic that focuses one’s communication. Timothy Warren would call this a theological product. “The theological product is the statement of the universal theological principle that the preacher has discovered in the text through the exegetical and theological process.”⁷²

Wilkens and Sanford indicate that the task is to show the truth of the Bible in opposition to the ideas contemporary people hold about themselves:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Individualism | I am the center of the universe. |
| 2. Consumerism | I am what I own. |
| 3. Nationalism | My nation, under God |
| 4. Moral Relativism | Absolute truth about relativism/something about relativism |
| 5. Scientific Naturalism | Only Matter matters |
| 6. The New Age | Are we Gods or are we God’s? |
| 7. Postmodern Tribalism | My tribe/my worldview |
| 8. Salvation Therapy | Not as good as it gets ⁷³ |

Are there ideas we should especially focus on? From their interviews with pastors, Nieman and Rogers encourage those who preach to teach three specific ideas: Particularity and universality of Christ as Savior. The Incarnation of Christ – God is familiar with our physicality. The historical faith is going somewhere – time is not fatalistic or cyclical.⁷⁴ Graham Johnston indicates how the modern mind needs direction

⁷² Timothy S. Warren, “A Paradigm For Preaching,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (October-December 1991): 473.

⁷³ Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 198.

⁷⁴ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 137-138.

by saying, “Preaching should direct people to weigh a belief system based on its own merit based on personal investigation as opposed to the postmodern axiom that they are all the same.”⁷⁵

Are there additional questions pastors should be asking? Yes, say Nieman and Rogers. Is this the first time the audience has heard this idea? How is it like one they have heard before? “One ancient rule in classical rhetoric is to develop familiar themes (‘agreement,’ as it was called) before moving to newer ideas and themes.”⁷⁶ This resulted in building upon what was familiar to introduce something new.

Are there topics for pastors to keep in mind when focusing their idea into a sermon? Jeter and Allen refer to how marginalized multicultural audiences relate to feelings experienced by Jesus. Among them are “...rejection, humiliation, alienation, loneliness, and nothingness.”⁷⁷

The Development of a Sermon

Sermons will develop in a variety of ways, depending upon the scripture a pastor uses and the approach the pastor takes. When asked, people from almost every ethnic group indicated that the use of narrative helped language to be better understood. Among the reasons cited was “...the inherent ease in following a narrative, enabling hearers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds to stay on track easily.”⁷⁸

If a story is told well it will speak not only to the mind but the heart. Stories are essential in this task of preaching across barriers of language and culture. Story as a

⁷⁵ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 99.

⁷⁶ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 78.

⁷⁷ Joseph R. Jeter and Ronald J. Allen, *One Gospel, Many Ears* (St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 127.

⁷⁸ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 45.

general way of communicating is in every culture. There are plots in a variety of forms of literature that repeat themselves. For example, we see the story of how a boy meets a girl, the plot of a person's quest for some type of holy grail, and the story that demonstrates someone's coming of age. It has been said that there are a total of eighteen plots that are used time and again to communicate some message. "What are the practical implications of all this for all of us, who by one means or another, preach the gospel? I think we must try as hard as possible to understand the needs in our audiences that prompt them to love these specific stories so much."⁷⁹ We must compare/contrast the Bible with what we read in other plots. The Bible contains many stories for a reason. Kaiser states, "Narrative is the preferred genre of the biblical text."⁸⁰ He goes on to point out the reason the majority of the Bible is in story is because the Bible is telling God's redemptive story. However there is more. Kaiser adds, "But there is more to this preference for narrative than immediately meets the eye. Note how many people in the pews on Sunday morning seem to have their interests revived when an anecdote or story is interjected into the message. Heads that had been bent over suddenly pop up..."⁸¹

When preaching historical narratives Michael Rydelnik has practical suggestions. "The preacher needs to build a bridge from the original audience to the contemporary one by recognizing what the passage teaches about God and our relationship with him. By climbing a ladder of abstraction, preachers will find the parallel between a text's theological message to the ancient audience and its message for the modern one."⁸² What

⁷⁹ David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 72.

⁸⁰ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 63.

⁸¹ Kaiser, Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 63.

⁸² Michael Rydelnik, "Preaching Historical Narrative," *The Moody Handbook of Preaching*, ed. John Koessler (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 134.

is meant by climbing a ladder of abstraction? Abstraction is the process of leaving out details. When we abstract, we select the most relevant information and leave out the rest. For example, a map is an abstraction of the terrain it represents. The map does not try to show all the details of the terrain, but only those which are relevant to the purpose of the map.”⁸³

Preaching each week in English to a large multi-Asian ministry, Ken Fong is passionate about the effectiveness of story-telling in helping the listener have a change of heart. He has abandoned the use of outlines for preaching in English to a multi-Asian congregation. Ken says, “The genius of stories is that they succeed in disengaging the critical and sober-minded left brained parts of us so that the wide-eyed innocence of the right-brained child can listen for the familiar timbre of the Father’s voice.”⁸⁴ Duane Elmer says that story-telling is an effective means for correction when someone is moving in a wrong direction. It is less confrontational and more indirect. It is less likely to cause shame, an important consideration for communicating with people from shame-based cultures.⁸⁵ For Fong story-telling is an intensely personal issue for the preacher:

I wanted the story to draw me in, to make me feel a part of it so that I could start to access its truth or its truth could access me. This was also my desire for my congregation. To touch their hearts in a transformational way, they not only had to learn how God’s story and mine converged; they also needed to hear how theirs came together with ours.⁸⁶

As pastors build the bridge to listeners whose cultures are different from their own, Rick Richardson advises using stories in a variety of ways:

⁸³ Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1981), 292.

⁸⁴ Ken Uyeda Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 134.

⁸⁵ Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 99-109.

⁸⁶ Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl*, 135.

Start with stories of experiences with people from the host culture. Share stories of your attempts to learn their culture, as well as stories that recognize the trust issues. Turn your principles and statements of propositional ideas into illustrations and stories. Tell the stories Jesus told. When you can, choose narrative passages from the Scriptures. Close with stories that challenge people to appropriate the truths you are communicating.⁸⁷

Closely related to story is the use of images as a way of speaking. “One of the key mechanisms by which they do this, according to our informants, is by being specific. The paradox is that the more particular and concrete the image, the more widely it speaks to more different kinds of people.”⁸⁸ One only need remember the parables of Jesus to appreciate this remark. Who can forget the parable of the sower or the mustard seed? In some worship services there is a children’s story in which a person will use an object to teach a lesson to kids. Adults who say that they found the children’s story more memorable than the sermon reflect how the image conveyed a concrete lesson idea.

From stories and words pastors can address the worldviews of their listeners. “But words are obviously only the most elementary of tools. We can only use them as part of a language which is shaped by the experience of a whole people.”⁸⁹ Newbigin advises the preacher to choose the passage accordingly, utilizing a scripture that most effectively creates a worldview. “This meant, as many readers may have guessed, a tendency to lean on Biblical narratives.”⁹⁰ The Old Testament portrays sorrow, conflict, exile and faithfulness. When using the wisdom literature, Zack Eswine gives a practical suggestion. “First, add a question to the study of each week’s sermon text. Are there any creation words in the text?”⁹¹ For example, in Psalm 1 the writer uses a tree with fruit to illustrate

⁸⁷ Rick Richardson, “The Intentional Bridge Builder,” *Preaching Today*, July 1, 2004.

⁸⁸ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 45.

⁸⁹ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 34.

⁹⁰ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 53.

⁹¹ Zack Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 169.

a righteous man. The image within God's creation connects to every culture and builds a bridge of understanding.

The Goal

The pastor does not preach simply to teach a lesson that the listener will understand. There must be an aim that involves a change from what the listener was before the sermon to what the listener will be after the sermon has been preached. "Given that understanding it is apparent that the 'change of mind' and 'renewing of the mind' involved in biblical conversion and Christian maturation is first and foremost a changed worldview. Whatever terms might be used, worldview change is intrinsic to discipleship."⁹²

According to Haddon Robinson, the pastor must clarify the sermon's goal. "The purpose behind each individual sermon is to secure some moral action. We need to know what that action is."⁹³ Chartier agrees. "There should be a proposition or key statement, to aid in developing the purpose of the sermon."⁹⁴ Ken Fong quotes Dallas Willard: "We must recognize, first of all, that the aim of the popular teacher in Jesus' time was not to impart information, but to make a significant change in the lives of the hearers."⁹⁵

What are the communication channels for change? Noting the use of drama and music in effective communication, Smith observes, "It is striking that the biblical prophets often acted out their message and used objects to give God's message. They

⁹² David J. Hesselgrave, "Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication, *International Journal of Frontier Missions* Vol. 14:2 (Apr.-June 1997), 79.

⁹³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 107.

⁹⁴ Chartier, *Preaching As Communication*, 62.

⁹⁵ Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl*, 117.

sought to touch emotion, to challenge the heart.”⁹⁶ Smith’s concern is that if we are too laid back, people may not think that we think it’s important. Believing that eighty percent of change comes about through emotion and twenty percent through reason, Smith asserts, “True reason involves both reason and emotion. When changes are sought at the deeper levels of culture, communication should be primarily emotive.”⁹⁷ Transformation, according to Fong, comes from inspiration, information, variety, and application. “If we are going to appeal to twenty-first century people’s hearts, especially Asian Americans, we must prepare our messages with the goal of transformation, not merely the transfer of information, clearly fixed before us.”⁹⁸

Editing

In this stage preachers are mastering the material. “The ability to adapt vocabulary and illustrations rests on knowing the content. If the subject is known only superficially, then changing words, illustrative stories or the order of the presentation is risky.”⁹⁹ It has been previously said that effective communicators travel up and down the abstraction ladder to be understood and to be interesting. While it is more interesting to say “five hundred yellow roses” than “a lot of yellow flowers,” it may help the listener from Korea to hear the speaker say “five hundred yellow flowers.” For some international listeners the word *rose* has not yet been mastered. These are the choices preachers make in editing. Communication expert John Condon puts it simply: “There are times to be specific and times to be abstract.”¹⁰⁰ Smith reminds pastors to be aware of

⁹⁶ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 299.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 301.

⁹⁸ Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl*, 126.

⁹⁹ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 99.

¹⁰⁰ John Condon, *Semantics and Communication* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1975), 48.

the listener's world, to use words/signals accurately and to use the right word. Context is part of communication.¹⁰¹

This is a time for pastors to watch for tendencies and habits we have. Duane Elmer writes about effectively communicating the gospel among non-westerners by carefully examining our choice of words. Words that emphasize individuals having a relationship with God are difficult, particularly when we come to the issue of sin. "When westerners are trying to communicate the gospel to people who are sensitive to shame, they need to shift gears and express biblical truths differently from what they have been used to."¹⁰² He cautions that our individualizing of the gospel message results in an overemphasis on the words *you*, *your sin*, and *your guilt*. Less use of individualizing words and more use of the words *we* and *all* will help the communicator. The scripture actually works in our favor with expressions like, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," and "For God so loved the world."¹⁰³

Pastors should communicate in more than one way. Robert Fortner reminds pastors that Jesus did not have one way of communicating. He says, "Jesus did not merely have one way of connecting to those with whom he communicated, but several — dependent on their circumstances and what he knew they needed to hear."¹⁰⁴ Fortner adds, "Acknowledge the active and crucial role of people who apprehend your message in making sense out of it and responding to it on their basis of their sense making. Make sure people matter." Nieman and Rogers agree. Pastors should practice recognition of the subcultures they are addressing. Recognition comes from three things. It begins with

¹⁰¹ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 74-75.

¹⁰² Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict*, 138.

¹⁰³ Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict*, 138.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Fortner, *Communication, Media and Identity: A Christian Theory of Communication* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Inc., 2007), 135.

honor of their intrinsic dignity. It includes familiarity, an appreciation of what we have learned over time. And it requires insight, reconsidering ourselves and our heartfelt commitments.¹⁰⁵

Pillai refers to removing impediments to understanding. “The point is that we don’t have to give up anything. We simply must try to make it easy for a person to relate to us and consider the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁶ Not giving anything up is another way of saying that the gospel message is not to change. “Adapting the message does not mean changing the message as it is affirmed in the Scriptures. It requires, instead, that ability to focus historic truth on contemporary issues.”¹⁰⁷ Pastors can remove impediments by praying that the right words are chosen and that the message will inhabit them. They should pray for the people who will hear it, and for their transformation. (Colossians 4:4)

Delivering Effective Sermons

A bridge is not finished when the sermon is prepared. The message from God must still be delivered. There are a number of considerations to which pastors should pay careful attention. Through preparation, feedback, and revision, sermons can be effectively delivered to an audience where multiple cultures are present.

Place

Before a pastor says anything in a sermon, something has already been said by the context in which the message will be delivered. Words are not enough. There needs to

¹⁰⁵ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Rajendra Pillai, *Reaching the World in our Own Backyard* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2003), 22.

¹⁰⁷ James Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communication: Its Theory and Practice* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1975), 31.

be a context for our message: The context may be observed in the worship service, pastoral care and the ministries of our congregation.¹⁰⁸ Specifically addressing the worship service and its context, Myron Chartier describes features of time and space which impact sermon delivery. First is the issue of time; on what day and at what time does the service occur? Next is space. How big is the room and what is the arrangement of seats? Then consider the physical features surrounding the message. How elevated is the platform; what does the speaker wear; what is the background?¹⁰⁹ Ken Fong addresses the context issue from the experience of remodeling a facility for multi-Asian ministry. “When we say ‘atmosphere’ we are concerned with two separate elements: the physical and the psychological.”¹¹⁰ Understanding that not every congregation can remodel its facilities to positively impress a multi-cultural audience, Fong places emphasis on an environment which is at least clean, neat and good condition. The attitude of the worshipers is an important part of the facility.¹¹¹ A Japanese worshiper was asked on one occasion what impressed her about the worship service in a western congregation made up mostly of white Americans. She was not a Christian and had never been in a religious building as large as the church sanctuary in which she was standing. Her enthusiastic response to the question was both physical and verbal: Her eyes looked up at the high ceiling and stained glass windows; then she said, “How big is your God!” She was overwhelmed with the size of the room.

Delivery comes from the pastor. Duffett contends that the speaker is part of the message. Congruence between content, emotion, voice, eyes and body builds trust

¹⁰⁸ Thomas H. Troeger, *Preaching and Worship* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 100.

¹⁰⁹ Chartier, *Preaching As Communication*, 85.

¹¹⁰ Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl*, 141.

¹¹¹ Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl*, 145-146.

between the communicator and listener. Both our voice and our body need to reflect who we are in real life.¹¹² Duane Litfin adds that facial expressions become more important when the speaker is close to the listener.¹¹³ Screens projecting a speaker increase concern. To summarize, when it comes to cross-cultural preaching no one style of delivery fits everyone. Nieman and Rogers say there is a limited consensus about presentation. Some of the potential issues over which critics disagree are eye contact, the use of the pulpit, posture and the use of notes in contrast with speaking from memory.¹¹⁴ Because of the differences with which people receive a sermon's presentation, how pastors deliver a message will be tailored to the congregation where they serve.

Words

Virtually all cross-cultural preaching will best be modified by addressing the pace of the words spoken and the use of phrases that are not readily understood. Slowing down and omitting English idioms are two of the recommendations made by Filipinos to missionary David Hesselgrave.¹¹⁵ Similar advice was given by career missionary Rev. John Bascom in a workshop entitled *Ministry In A Multicultural Context*. Bascom advises pastors in cross-cultural preaching to slow down, use understandable words, minimize idioms, and watch carefully their use of humor.¹¹⁶ Paralanguage is a term used by Duane Litfin to describe all those things we communicate with our voice apart from the words themselves.¹¹⁷ Carley Dodd defines paralanguage as "...a set of audible sounds that

¹¹² Robert Duffett, *A Relevant Word* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1995), 119-131.

¹¹³ Litfin, *Public Speaking*, 322.

¹¹⁴ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 50.

¹¹⁵ David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1991), 353.

¹¹⁶ John Bascom, *Ministry In A Multicultural Context*, March 11, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Litfin, *Public Speaking*, 323.

accompany oral language to augment its meaning.”¹¹⁸ She refers to the variations of vocal quality to describe paralanguage. She says, “... a number of variations in vocal quality, intensity, tone and pitch height can alter otherwise simple statements or questions.”¹¹⁹ Words are important, but in delivery they carry meaning from within a number of other physical signals. “Persons often put more trust in how a statement is uttered than in the words used.”¹²⁰

Nonverbal Communication

Writing on intercultural communication, Carley Dodd says that the nonverbal signals carry more meaning. It is widely believed that 93% of meaning in conversation is transmitted nonverbally. “Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously.”¹²¹ What aspects of nonverbal communication must pastors remember?

Robert Duffett organizes nonverbal communication three ways: body, voice and eyes. Of the three he says voice is the most important. “It is the physiological engine that makes oral communication possible.”¹²² Chartier categorizes nonverbal communication as voice, body, objects and environment.¹²³ Dodd broadly describes nonverbal communication under the categories of proxemics and kinesics. It is important to pay careful attention to non-verbal communication for a number of reasons. Among the functions of nonverbal communication are either complementing or contradicting a

¹¹⁸ Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 148.

¹¹⁹ Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 149.

¹²⁰ Chartier, *Preaching as Communication*, 83.

¹²¹ Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 134-135.

¹²² Duffett, *A Relevant Word*, 133.

¹²³ Chartier, *Preaching as Communication*, 82.

verbal message, repeating a verbal communication, and substituting for verbal communication.¹²⁴

Duane Litfin simplifies Dodd's approach with the assertion: "The only rule is that what you are doing physically should complement and reinforce what you are saying verbally."¹²⁵ Congruence includes the relationship between the pastor and the congregation. Thus, congruence is described as being a neighbor. Drawing from the parable of the Good Samaritan, Nieman and Rogers encourage preachers to use the word *neighbor*. "...[A]ny preaching holds the potential to be deeply cross-cultural, even though it may occur in settings that do not seem terribly diverse or congregations that do not welcome changes in that direction. The issue for all preachers is, quite simply, have our words shown us to be a neighbor?"¹²⁶

The term kinesics refers to gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body positions, body movement, and forms of greeting and their relation to communication. Some are physiological and somewhat involuntary like yawning and stretching. Others are personally and culturally conditioned. It's worth observing that occulesics, a category of kinesics, can convey various meanings. The following table illustrates meaning when one widens his eyes.¹²⁷

TABLE 3. OCCULESICS

Significance	Intention	Culture
Really!	Surprise, wonder	Dominant Anglo
I resent this.	Anger	Chinese
I don't believe you.	Challenge	French
I don't understand.	Call for help	Hispanic
I'm innocent	Persuasion	African American

¹²⁴ Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 135-146.

¹²⁵ Litfin, *Public Speaking*, 317.

¹²⁶ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 14.

¹²⁷ Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 139.

Pastors might wonder if they should diminish or control the use of nonverbal communication for fear of miscommunication. But many listeners would assert that nonverbals are uncontrollable, reflecting what is actually believed no matter what is said.

Pastors should consider the powerful advantages of nonverbal communication:

1. The nonverbal signals carry more meaning.
2. Personality is conveyed through nonverbal signals.
3. Feelings and emotions are more accurately conveyed through nonverbal communication.
4. The relationship between the preacher and the listener is influenced by nonverbal communication.
5. Nonverbal communication conveys meanings and intentions that are relatively free of deception, distortion and confusion.
6. Nonverbal communication is potentially more efficient.
7. Nonverbal communication is better suited for tacit messages. Some ideas (life/death issues) are more effectively communicated indirectly.¹²⁸

Feedback

Feedback is part of communication. Nonverbal feedback comes to the speaker informally from the listener. A person can adjust the preaching when receiving the feedback in eye contact, facial expressions and body language. “The pastor can know if the people understand, if they are paying attention, or if they are resisting what is being said. With that feedback – which in a formal service is received primarily from body language – the pastor can alter the manner of speech and even content. This interaction keeps the communication process alive.”¹²⁹

But also pastors can give people a chance to give them feedback in writing. Kraft asserts that speakers want to know that we’re being understood. “We need feedback in

¹²⁸ Chartier, *Preaching as Communication*, 89-92.

¹²⁹ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 168.

order to keep people from misperception.”¹³⁰ Smith concurs, stating, “The lack of immediate feedback, or even full feedback, causes distortion of the communication process.”¹³¹ He advises communicators to seek feedback formally and informally. “Understanding someone properly involves learning from him, and learning from someone properly involves changing oneself. Deliberately seeking feedback and proper use of feedback to modify the form and presentation of the message are the missing element...”¹³²

Preaching is the building of a bridge to connect the timeless truth of God to the listeners who attend worship services. When listeners come to worship from a different culture, bridge building must take on a more intentional approach than when the entire congregation speaks the same primary language. The effective sermon will be approached as an act of communication, prepared with the necessary elements for cross-cultural clarity, and preached with consideration for the important aspects of delivery to every pew.

¹³⁰ Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 226.

¹³¹ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 168.

¹³² Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 341.

CHAPTER 4

PREACHING SEMINAR

The commitment to effectively communicate is captured in the words of Paul, “But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.” (1 Corinthians 14:19) The design of this project reflects a commitment to be understood which is intentional and comprehensive. Sessions are organized to facilitate learning by those who preach in English in churches where people from multiple language groups are present.

Chapter four contains three lesson plans designed to guide the reader in teaching *Preaching in English When Multiple Language Groups are Present*. The lesson plan notes are organized into three sessions. Session one is on communication. It surfaces the issue of why this topic is important, answering the question by demonstrating that communication between ethnic groups may seem virtually impossible. Constructing a communication bridge is the solution to this problem. Although the Bible is the starting point for every sermon, preparation in preaching should not dwell entirely on the content, forgetting who will hear the message. Preaching across culture heightens the need for an approach which focuses on the listener. Every situation holds the potential for communication to be blocked. The New Testament provides numerous examples of how a communication bridge is formed and crossed effectively through preaching that is sensitive to the listener.

Session two teaches preparation. It takes basic approaches of preaching and reconsiders them by asking who the audience is. Although listeners share the language of the speaker, speakers often do not share the worldview of the listener. Ethnicity

influences understanding, requiring the preacher to give serious attention to developmental questions such as: “Is this true?”

Session three addresses delivery. Language is carried by the verbal habits and nonverbal signals of the individual who preaches. Careful attention to the presentation of a message will be improved even further by seeking feedback on the preacher’s delivery.

Preaching in English When Multiple Language Groups are Present

Slide 1 These lesson plan notes are for a seminar on preaching. The seminar is three hours in length, three sessions of approximately one hour each. Those attending will be people who preach in local churches, primarily pastors.

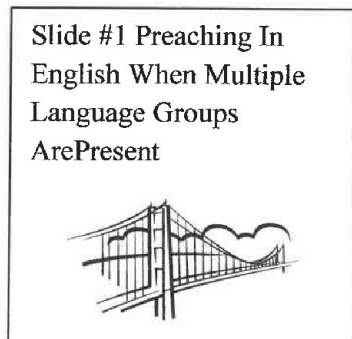


Figure 4.1 Preaching in English

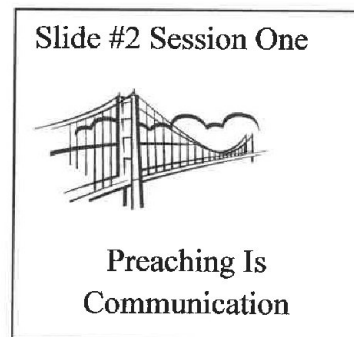


Figure 4.2 Preaching Is Communication

Session One Preaching Is Communication

Slide 2 This first session begins with the participants seated at tables, each person having a prepared folder. The presenter’s lesson plan notes correspond to a power point presentation. The folders contain notes pages, three pictures to a page for each of the three workshop sessions. (Notes from the power point presentation are Appendix 6.)

Goals and Objectives

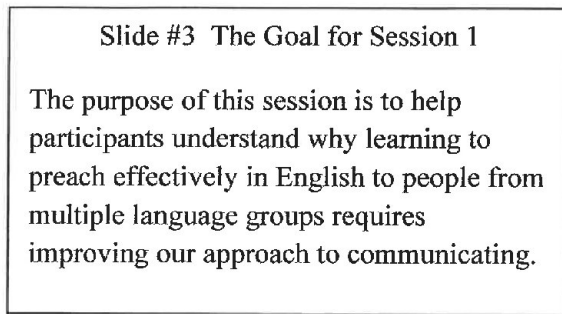


Figure 4.3 The Goal For Session 1

Slide 3 The purpose/goal of session one is to help participants understand why learning to effectively preach in English with multiple language groups requires improving our approach to communicating.

The speaker explains the purpose/goal of the session and indicates that it will be met at the end of the session when the participants achieve the following three objectives.

1. The participants will be able to state in writing the four ingredients of communication, according to John Stott. Source/Encoder – Message - Code/Channel - Receiver
2. The participants will be able to list five religious words that are difficult for international listeners to understand.
3. The participants will demonstrate a commitment to focus on the listener in future preaching by signing a written covenant which is provided by the instructor.

Today's Situation

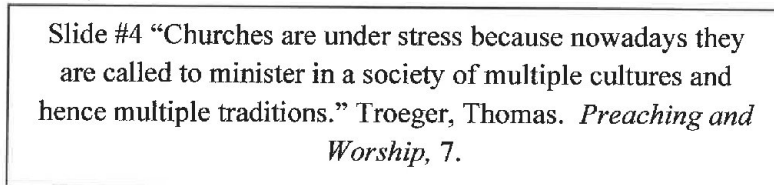


Figure 4.4 Today's Churches Are Under Stress

Slide 4 “Churches are under stress because they are nowadays called to minister in a society of multiple cultures and hence multiple ritual traditions.”¹ The presenter shares the following story of a pastor who was asked to perform a baby-naming ceremony for an African family attending his church.

A Pastor's Testimony

I felt some stress last spring when asked to perform a naming ceremony for an African baby. Banji and Queen Oyedele, a Nigerian family asked me to announce the baby's name in the company of the family and friends they would invite to the celebration for a Friday afternoon in May. As regular attendees of our church they hoped to use the church building for this event and enjoy a meal afterward. I was asked to lead some songs of worship and give a brief message in addition to the naming of and a dedicatory prayer for the baby. In preparation for the event I contacted a missionary who had recently led a similar ceremony for a family that had immigrated to Italy. My friend Jim gave me some advice on the way to pray for the baby. Based on his experience he told me to hold him high in the air and pray the longest prayer I could.

I visited in the Oyedele home a few days before the event in order to better understand all of the names of the children in the family and why the couple had two older children who were back in Nigeria. One of the things I learned is that the father is a prince in his tribe, the Yoruba. We went over the order of the service and discussed the songs we would sing. They helped me spell and know the meaning of the baby's name.

On the day of the celebration I was extremely nervous. I practiced saying the baby's name over and over again. His name is Olywatimilehin. The name means: God is

¹ Thomas Troeger, *Preaching and Worship* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999), 7.

behind me. He would later be called Timmy for short. Using a microphone, I welcomed the guests that afternoon. I did the best I could to speak clearly to the friends of the family. The ceremony followed a printed order of service in a bulletin I prepared. Those attending sang hymns and prayed together in preparation for the naming.

After concluding the ceremony I spent time visiting with the various guests, going from table to table. I complimented everyone on their tribal clothing. We ate some delicious food, laughed and talked together for a long time. It seemed as if everyone was happy with the service and pleased with the personal attention given by a number of our Church members who attended the event. I felt peace after leaving the dinner. It was the most peace I had felt for many days.

Small Groups

After sharing this story the participants are asked to form groups of three. These groups will be permanent groups for the seminar. A handout (Appendix 2) for group time in sessions one, two and three is to be taken out from the folders so that each participant can take notes. In a five-minute time of group sharing each person should answer the question: "What experiences, signs or indicators have you seen in your recent ministry that makes you realize how important it is to communicate more effectively with people for whom English is a second language?"

Large Group

The participants will return to the large group again. A question to be briefly considered is why the United States has seen such a rise in immigration in the past four

decades. In the U.S. immigration trends have changed dramatically since the 1965 Immigration Act. This is described in detail in the book, *Preaching to Every Pew* by James Nieman and Thomas Rogers.²

For those conducting this seminar with participants from the ABC/USA denomination the following data will be of importance to share:

A May 2010 letter from the ABC USA is read describing the U.S. as a mission field. It is the fourth largest and most diverse in the world. 71% of the USA is un-churched.

A Feb. 2011 letter reports over 100,000 refugees were resettled by ABC/USA since 1965. From Myanmar and Thailand the U.S. has seen many more come in recent years. In 2010 there were 2,000 refugees sponsored by American Baptist Home Mission Societies, including 565 from Burma, 304 from Iraq, 209 from Bhutan, 445 from Cuba, and 88 from Somalia. American Baptist Home Mission Societies provided close to \$43,000 in refugee emergency assistance and \$28,000 to support church projects benefiting refugees from Burma. Many of these refugees, particularly the Burmese are coming to our churches.

Ministry is increasingly taking place in situations where people from multiple language groups are present. The need for effective cross cultural ministry is realized not only in the local churches but also when Christians travel on mission trips, serve in campus ministry, and offer ministry with children and youth at camps and conferences.


² James R. Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 9, 10.

The Situation of the First Century Church

Slide 5 Today's situation finds a parallel with the first century church.

Slide #5 The Challenge Faced By The Apostles

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8



The command and challenge were always present. They obeyed the command and met the challenge through preaching.

Figure 4.5 Challenge Faced by the Apostles

Slide #6 Preaching in Acts
The Gospel Was:

<u>Universal</u>	Personal
Comprehensive	Ongoing
Powerful	Transforming
Portable	<u>Unchanging</u>





Figure 4.6 Preaching in Acts

The Bible documents how the church became multi-cultural through the Holy Spirit's leading in the book of Acts. Acts 1:8 shows how the Apostles were commanded to be witness of Jesus. They did it through preaching. The New Testament book of Acts reveals a history of cross cultural preaching. Slide 6 From the book of Acts preaching can be described in the following eight ways. The accompanying handout entitled, *Preaching Across Cultures In the New Testament* is to be distributed. (Appendix 2). Slide 7 Emphasis is placed on the importance of preaching a message that is both **universal** and **unchanging**, the first and last descriptions in the handout.

Slide #7 Universal, Unchanging

The theological premise of Acts is that Jesus is Lord of all so the gospel can go to all. Bock, Darrell. *Acts*, 759




"What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Jesus Christ. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you." II Timothy 1:13-14

Figure 4.7 Universal, Unchanging

Slide #8 Message For Two Different People

An Ethiopian heard from Philip
Acts 8:26-40



SergiusPaulus heard from Saul (Paul) Acts 13:4-12

Same message, delivered in different ways.
Why?

Figure 4.8 Messages for Different People

Slide 8 The method of communicating by witnesses in Acts differed: Philip taught the gospel to the Ethiopian in Acts 8 one way and Paul demonstrated it to Sergius Paulus

in Acts 13:4-12 in another way. Why should a preacher deliver the same message in different ways? For the sake of the audience the preachers of Acts were contextualizing. This is a form of communication illustrated through a metaphor of the bridge.

Preaching is Bridge Building

<p>Slide #9 Preaching Is Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building a bridge from then to now 2. Building a bridge to others <p><i>"It is because preaching is not exposition only but communication, not just the exegesis of a text, but the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it...."</i></p> <p>Stott, John R.W. <i>Between Two Worlds</i>, 137</p>	<p>Slide #10 The Process of Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Source/Encoder (Preacher) 2. Message (What's being communicated) 3. Code/Channel (How he/she communicates) 4. Receiver (to whom it's addressed) <p>Stott, John R.W. <i>Between Two Worlds</i>, 81</p>
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Figure 4.9 Preaching Is Communication Figure 4.10 The Process of Communication

Slide 9 Communication is to be imagined as building a bridge – one message, from a single source given to a specific group of people. There is a process to communication. “It is because preaching is not exposition only but communication, not just the exegesis of a text, but the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it....”³

Slide 10 There are four ingredients in the process of communication enumerated in the following passage from John Stott's book, *Between Two Worlds*.

1. Source/Encoder (Preacher)
2. Message (What's being communicated)
3. Code and Channel (How he/she communicates)
4. Receiver (to whom it's addressed)⁴

³ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1982), 137.


⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today*, 81.

Slide 11 The fourth ingredient is receiving special attention in today's seminar. Missionary and teacher Charles Kraft is known for his receptor approach to communication. He says that "Every communicational activity involves a gap and a bridge. A communicational gap always exists between human beings, and those who seek to interact with them...To cross such a gap a communicational bridge is needed."⁵ When first considering the receiver it should be noted that the Ethiopian in Acts 8 is from a different ethnic group than Philip, but understands the speaker's language. The question is: What is the problem in communication?

The Communication Problems Preachers Face

Slide #11 The Receiver in the Process

1. Source/Encoder
2. Message
3. Code and Channel
4. Receiver



Receiver from a different ethnic group
Speaks a different language, but...
Understands the speaker's language
So...what's the problem?

Figure 4.11 The Receiver in the Process

Slide #12 Problems For International Listeners

1. Religious language is hard to "decode." Jeter, Joseph & Allen, Ronald. *One Gospel, Many Ears*, 119
What are some difficult words?
2. "The paper is not blank. The new message is placed on top of messages already heard and believed." Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding*, 78




Figure 4.12 International Listeners

Slide 12 A problem for listeners is the need to decode religious words. For example the word "sheep" is used in two different ways in Isaiah 53 and may well have contributed to the misunderstanding of the Ethiopian who was studying this passage in Acts 8. Participants are asked to make a list of religious words that may be difficult for international listeners. (The examples are provided if needed to prompt the participants.)

⁵ Charles Kraft, *Communication Theory For Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 3.

1. Sanctified
2. Reconciled
3. Redeemed
4. Atonement
5. Justified

(The participant will list five or more on the notes page in the folder next to slide twelve)

Another problem for listeners is: “The paper is not blank. The new message is placed on top of messages already heard and believed.”⁶ Transition: Fortunately we have the English language to help us.

Communicating in English

Slide #13 English Widely Used
“There has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English.” David Crystal, *English As A Global Language*, 189

English is to contemporary preaching what Greek was to Apostolic preaching. The language is used for education, commerce and politics.

Figure 4.13 English Widely Used

Slide 13 English today is in many ways like the Greek language was for the Apostles. Michael Green describes first century Greek as a language that was used for: economics, politics, and philosophy. It was spoken by, “the world’s greatest thinkers.”⁷

The English language helps to build the bridge of preaching. The expression *lingua franca* refers to a common language used for education and commerce. While different languages have served in this capacity for a region of the world, or a political

⁶ Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 78.

⁷ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2003), 17.

empire, “There has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English.”⁸

Slide #14 English By An African
If the African world is communicating through English, “*I feel that English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience... But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.*” (Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe) Crystal, David. *English As A Global Language*, 184

Figure 4.14 English By An African

Slide #15 But English Can Mean Different Things To Different People

“*Meaning is in people, not in the words.*”

Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding*, 51



Figure 4.15 Different Meanings

Slide 14 The following is a quotation from Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe: “I feel that English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience... But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.”⁹

Slide 15 A lingua franca is an advantage in preaching. Still, under any circumstances communication can be difficult. Why? Language differences -- Jesus didn’t have this problem with Saul. He used Aramaic to talk with him. (Acts 26:14) But we will almost always be using English, so the burden is on people to translate. A problem can arise because words in English can mean different things to different people.

Slide 16 What causes this result?

Slide #16 We May Be Out of Date

“When we move to religious language, the problems multiply. First we may find ourselves using archaic or outdated language that has lost its meaning for people today.”

Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding*, 119

Figure 4.16 We May Be Out of Date

⁸ David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 2009), 189.

⁹ Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 184.

1. Language – meanings are within people so even when we use the correct word in a language our message may be misunderstood.
2. An archaic use of the English language might be part of our preaching. We may be out of date. What do I mean when I say, “I’ve been washed in the blood?” Could I say something else? There is still another problem. It has to do with what some listeners are expecting from preachers and their use of the Bible. The following testimony is read to the large group.

A Pastor’s Testimony: “Misunderstood In Ministry”

I once met with a couple at a restaurant to suggest they take the step of joining our Church. She was Chinese, he was Japanese. I told them that soon we would have a membership class. We could have the class next Sunday afternoon at 4:00, I said, “If that works for you.” The couple did not understand the idiom, “If that works for you.” Once I explained it to them they responded that they did not know why the time of the class should be their decision. They saw me as the person in authority to make a choice like that. In one personal conversation I was misunderstood on two levels! I could only imagine how much of my preaching they misunderstood! But I knew they held me in very high esteem.

The presenter asks the large group: How do the international listeners in your congregation esteem you? What signs do they give that recognizes your spiritual authority? (Possible signs: use of titles when addressing Pastor, body language during greeting, etc.)

Slide 17 How do we present the Bible in preaching? Pastors are granted “authority” – it is rooted in how people see the role of preachers in scripture.

<p>Slide #17 International Listeners and the Bible “It is only natural that ethnic groups who derive the preacher’s authority from Biblical authority would expect the preaching event to be profoundly stamped by scripture.” Nieman and Rogers, <i>Preaching To Every Pew</i>, 42. But... “We need to make sure it doesn’t come across as just another book about religion.” Newbigin, Lesslie, <i>The Gospel In a Pluralistic Society</i>, 90.</p>	<p>Slide #18 Truth “One of the greatest difficulties is to keep before the audience’s mind the question of Truth. They always think you are recommending Christianity not because it is true but because it is good. And in the discussion they will at every moment try to escape from the issue ‘True-or False’ into stuff about a good society or morals,...” Lewis, C.S. <i>God In The Dock</i>, 101</p>
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Figure 4.17 International Listeners: Bible

Figure 4.18 Truth by C.S. Lewis

“It is only natural that ethnic groups who derive the preacher’s authority from Biblical authority would expect the preaching event to be profoundly stamped by scripture.”¹⁰

Listeners from other countries and faith groups have been exposed to many scriptures.

“We need to make sure it doesn’t come across as just another book about religion.”¹¹

Slide 18 “One of the great difficulties is to keep before the audience’s mind the question of Truth. They always think you are recommending Christianity not because it is *true* but because it is *good*. And in the discussion they will at every moment try to escape from the issue ‘True-or False’ into stuff about a good society or morals,...”¹²

Slide 19 Preachers are advised to avoid reducing their messages to lowest common denominator. “Part of maintaining our adherence to the truth demands that we do not reduce Christianity to the lowest common denominator of pragmatism.”¹³ Pastors are tempted to limit their preaching to themes such as: “God is love.” Preachers should teach people more about God than that! What else makes communication hard? The message comes across in nonverbal ways.

¹⁰ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 42.

¹¹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 90.

¹² C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 101.

¹³ Jeffrey Arthurs, “The Postmodern Mind and Preaching,” *Preaching To A Shifting Culture*, ed. Scott Gibson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 190.

Slide #19 Truth
 “Part of maintaining our adherence to the truth demands that we do not reduce Christianity to the lowest common denominator of pragmatism.” Gibson, Scott, “The Postmodern Mind and Preaching.” In the book, *Preaching Across Cultures*, 90, edited by Jeffrey Arthurs.

Figure 4.19 Truth by Scott Gibson

Nonverbal Communication

Slide # 20 It's More Than Words!
 It is widely believed that 93% of meaning in conversation is transmitted nonverbally. “Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously.” Dodd, Carley, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 134-135
 What we say must not be contradicted by what else is going on in and around us.

Figure 4.20 It's More Than Words

Slide #21 High Context Vs. Low Context

Low Context – Primary Thing is Words
 High Context-Primary Things is Nonverbal
 Ecclesiastes 6:1 “The more the words the less the meaning.”
 John 1:14 “The word became flesh.”
 Which cultures are high context?
 Pillai, Rajendra K. *Reaching The World In Our Own Backyard*, 52.

Figure 4.21 High Context vs. Low Context

Slides 20, 21 The challenge of nonverbal communication is that preachers must avoid contradicting in their nonverbal messages what they are saying with their words. According to Rajendra Pillai, high context cultures emphasize nonverbal communication. Low context cultures emphasize verbal communication. Preachers are to be reminded of the scripture, “The more the words the less the meaning.” (Ecclesiastes 6:10) It has been suggested that if more than half the world is illiterate it is no wonder the word became flesh. (John 1:14) The participants are asked: Which parts of the world would you think are high context- requiring less verbal and more nonverbal communication? According

to Pillai, Asian, African, and Latin American cultures are high context. “Gestures, posture, silence and eye-contact all play a significant role in communicating.”¹⁴

What Makes It Possible to Communicate


<p>Slide #22 Is Effective Communication Possible? Yes!</p> <p>“Absolute communication is not possible, nevertheless effective communication is always possible between people of different cultural backgrounds.” Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of human reasoning is essentially the same, irrespective of cultural diversity. 	<p>Slide #23 Is it Possible? Yes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people have a common range of human experience. • All people possess the capacity for at least some adjustment to the symbolic “grids” of others. <p>Webber, Robert. <i>God Still Speaks</i>, 88.</p> 
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Figure 4.22 Effective Communication?

Figure 4.23 Is It Possible? Yes!

Slide 22 Preaching English among multiple cultures seems like a daunting task. Can we ever be effective at communicating? Drawing from Nida, Robert Webber says, “yes,” for three reasons.¹⁵

- The process of human reasoning is essentially the same, irrespective of cultural diversity.
- All people have a common range of human experiences.

Slide 23

- All people possess the capacity for at least some adjustment to the symbolic “grids” of others.

Review: The presenter asks the participants to fill in their handout with answers to the question: “What are the four ingredients in the process of communication?” They are:

Source/Encoder, Message, Code/ Channel, Receiver.

¹⁴ Rajendra Pillai, *Reaching the World in Our Own Backyard* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2003), 52

¹⁵ Robert Webber, *God Still Speaks* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), 87-88.

Slide # 24 The Sequence of Communication
1. _____ (Preacher)
2. _____ (What's being communicated)
3. _____ (How he/she communicates)
4. _____ (To whom it's addressed)
Stott, John R.W. <i>Between Two Worlds</i> , 81.

Figure 4.24 The Sequence of Communication

Slide 24 The presenter will go over the four answers; then ask the large group: “Of these ingredients which one do you think will be the most important for you to focus on in your future preaching?”

Focusing On Listeners

Slide #25 Effective Communication
Focuses on the listeners
“We must follow the example of Jesus and begin our communication in terms of where people are and not where we would like them to be.”
Engel, James, <i>Contemporary Christian Communication: Its Theory and Practice</i> , 287

Figure 4.25 Effective Communication


Slide #26 We Are Witnesses – Acts 1:8
Notice Peter’s words in Acts 10:28-43
“...to associate with any Gentile.”
“God accepts people from every nation.”
“We are witnesses of everything he did.”
We cross bridges, but first Jesus crossed the biggest bridge to come to us.


Figure 4.26 We Are Witnesses

Slide 25 Today’s seminar considers all four ingredients, but is focusing on listeners. “We must follow the example of Jesus and begin our communication in terms of where people are and not where we would like them to be.”¹⁶

Slide 26 The Apostle Peter describes his crossing of the cultural bridge. After crossing the threshold into the home of Cornelius, Peter reminded his listeners that it

¹⁶ James Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communication: Its Theory and Practice* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), 287.

violated his Jewish cultural law to associate with or visit a Gentile. (Acts 10:28) The Greek word translated Gentile was *allophylos*, “one of a different race.” This was a kinder and more sensitive word than *ethne*, which is more frequently used to designate Gentile. This is its only use in all the New Testament.¹⁷ Truly Peter had sensitively crossed a culture for the sake of all who would follow him.

At this point the presenter makes the observation from Nieman and Rogers that the word “ethnic” is preferred to the word “race.” Ethnicity connotes a positive grouping of people based on shared history and identity. Race tends to be a word that establishes boundaries and is regarded as adversarial.¹⁸ (Ethnicity is referenced in chapter three, page 50).

Slide 27 Peter tells the household of Cornelius that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. (Acts 10:35) Peter is telling Cornelius that the apostles are witnesses of Jesus, and that God accepts people from every nation. (Acts 10:39) The Holy Spirit came on the household of Cornelius. They spoke in tongues. Water baptism followed. Jesus had given the disciples this commission to be his witnesses, but all must remember Jesus crossed the first bridge by coming to us.

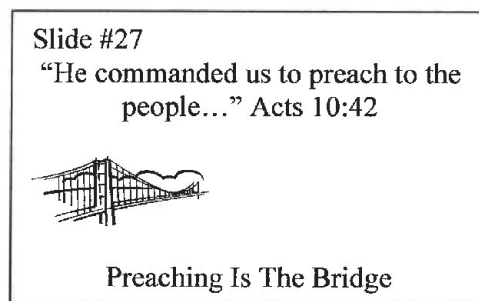


Figure 4.27 Acts 10:42

¹⁷ David Williams, *New International Bible Commentary: Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 197.

¹⁸ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 24-26.

Preaching

Slide #28 Covenant
*I will build a bridge to people in ministry
by thinking about the ones who listen to
me preach. Like Jesus I will begin with
people where they are and do my best, by
God's grace, to communicate effectively
with all people in our congregation.*

Figure 4.28 Covenant

Preaching, says Peter is something Jesus commands them to do. (Acts 10:42) This is why they went. (Matthew 28:18-20) It is why Peter went to Caesarea. To be a witness meant to go to them, to cross whatever divides as Jesus would. The seminar participants are given the following covenant. It is read aloud by the teacher. The participants are asked if they will sign it as a commitment to intentionally take steps for more effective communication in future preaching.

Slide 28 COVENANT: *I will build a bridge to people in ministry by thinking about the ones who listen to me preach. Like Jesus I will begin with people where they are and do my best, by God's grace, to communicate effectively with all people in our congregation.*

The teacher tells the participants they will be able to report if they signed the covenant at the end of the seminar during the evaluation period. The first session is closed with prayer. Participants are invited to visit the resource table to look at materials that are being used in the presentations.

Session Two Preparing Effective Sermons

Slide 29 This second session begins with the participants seated around tables, each person having his/her own prepared folder. The speaker is using power point. The folders contain notes pages for session two, three pictures to a page for each of the three workshop sessions. (Notes pages are located in Appendix 6.)

Goals and Objectives

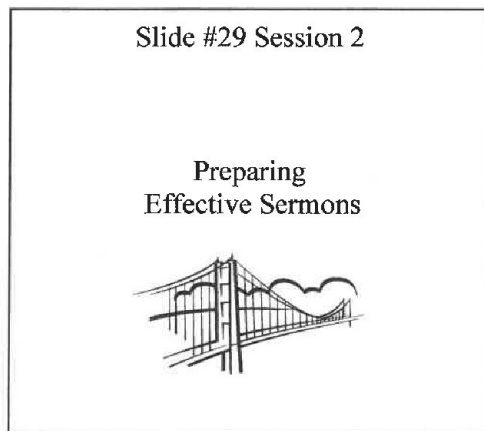


Figure 4.29 Preparing Effective Sermons

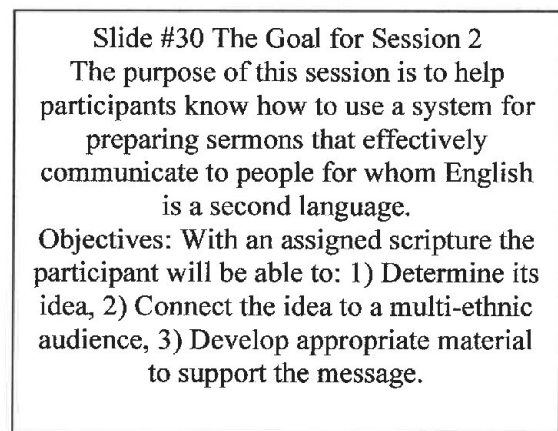


Figure 4.30 The Goal for Session 2

Slide 30 The speaker explains the purpose/goal of the session and indicates that the purpose/goal at the end of the hour will be met by the following three objectives. The purpose of this session is to help participants know how to use a system for preparing sermons that effectively communicate to people for whom English is a second language.

Three Objectives: Using an assigned scripture, the participant will know how to:

- 1) Determine the passage's idea for a message to be preached.
- 2) Connect the idea to a multi-ethnic audience for a message to be preached.
- 3) Develop appropriate material to support the message being preached.

Slide #31 The Bible

The advantage of narratives.
If we want to teach like Jesus...
Notice the examples of the Apostles
preaching in Acts. (Retelling their
stories and experiences with Jesus.)
Making the familiar unfamiliar.
Fong, Ken. *Pursuing the Pearl*, 134

Figure 4.31 The Bible

The Bible

Slide 31 There is an advantage in using Biblical narratives. People relate to stories and connect easily with them. Story plots are in all literature and listeners can find points of comparison between stories they already know and stories in the Bible. The entire Bible will be used in preaching, but attention is given in this session to the impact of powerful narratives. “What are the practical implications of all this for all of us, who by one means or another, preach the gospel? I think we must try as hard as possible to understand the needs in our audiences that prompt them to love these specific stories so much.”¹⁹

“The genius of stories is that they succeed in disengaging the critical and sober-minded left brained parts of us so that the wide-eyed innocence of the right-brained child can listen for the familiar timbre of the Father’s voice.”²⁰

Lesslie Newbigin advises the preacher to choose the passage accordingly, utilizing a scripture that most effectively creates a worldview. “This meant, as many

¹⁹ David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 72.

²⁰ Ken Uyeda Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 134.

readers may have guessed, a tendency to lean on Biblical narratives.²¹ Today's seminar focuses now on the preparation of a sermon from a story found in the gospels.

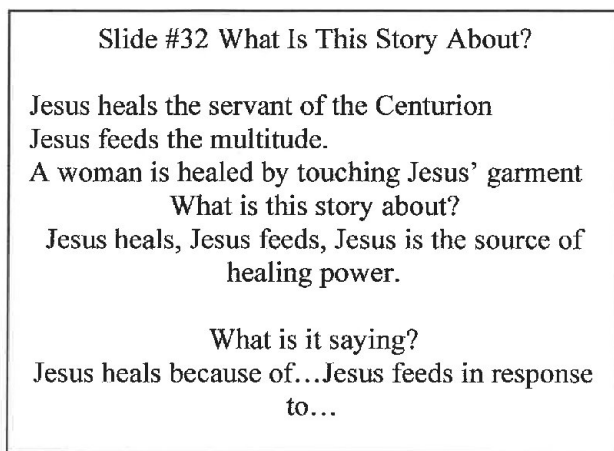


Figure 4.32 What is this Story About?

Meeting In Small Groups

Slide 32 Three Bible stories are assigned to the groups. These passages are on the handout found in the folder, utilized in session one. Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 9:10-17; Matthew 9:20-22 In groups of three the participants read their assigned story aloud, and then together answer the question: "What is the idea of the story?"

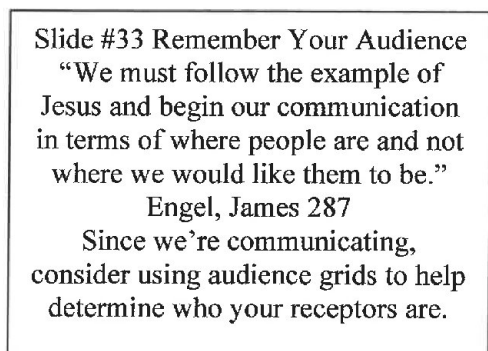


Figure 4.33 Remember Your Audience

²¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 34.

Receiver/Receptor

Slide 33 While the participants are still in their small groups, the presenter refers to the following audience grid on their handout:²²

TABLE 4. AUDIENCE GRIDS

	Home	Work	School	Church	Subculture
Children					
Single					
Married					
Divorced					
Widowed					

The small group is to estimate the percentage of people from each category in the first column who are in their hypothetical audience. Focusing for the moment on the married group they are to further divide that number into the following ethnic groups Caucasian, Asian, African American, and Hispanic. The group is then to discuss on what aspect of the miracle story persons who specifically come from the married Asian background might find a connection.

²² Keith Willhite, *Preaching With Relevance: Without Dumbing Down* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 33. See Thesis Chapter 3, p. 50.

Presenter Addresses Everyone While Still In Small Groups

Slide #34 Worldview

“A worldview is a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in faith about the basic makeup of the world and how the world works.”
Miller, Darrow. *Discipling Nations*, 36

A different worldview will cause you to hear the same data differently.

Figure 4.34 Worldview

Slide 34 Receiver/receptors come from a culture that has a worldview. “A worldview is a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in faith about the basic makeup of the world and how the world works.”²³

Slide #35 Worldviews On Time		
<u>Animism</u>	<u>Secularism</u>	<u>Theistic</u>
Sees time as cyclical	Sees time as an	Sees time as a
Wheel	Hourglass	Course
Status Quo	Running Out	Progress

Figure 4.35 Worldviews on Time

Slide 35 The teacher explains that the implication regarding time from an animistic viewpoint is that everything is predetermined and set to repeat so that humans lack the capacity to experience change for the better. A secular approach to time leads people to acquire all they can while time is available. Things will not get any better for us after time has run its course.

²³ Darrow L. Miller, *Discipling Nations* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1998), 36.

<p>Slide #36 Worldview Issues</p> <p><u>Ideas:</u> Time</p> <p><u>Words:</u> Steward/servant</p> <p><u>Principles:</u> “You have been faithful with a little...” Matthew 25:21</p>
--

Figure 4.36 Worldview Issues

Slide 36 Worldview issues are captured in ideas, words and principles. You may be aware that the Muslim world struggles with the thought of God having a son. Three worldview issues that are tied together are time, stewardship, and the principle of God rewarding the person who is faithful in stewardship of a few things.

<p>Slide #37 An Idea That Connects</p> <p>Subject/complement. What is the passage about? What is it saying about it? If you can't say it in one sentence, neither can your audience.</p> <p>Put your ideas through contrasting worldviews so that the Bible can be understood as the truth.</p> <p>Put those ideas in tension with each other.</p>
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Figure 4.37 An Idea That Connects

Small Group Discussion

Slide 37 Ideas, words and principles are the ways to get an idea that connects with all of the receptors and doesn't leave out an ethnic group. The groups will look at their passages and consider how the scripture presents time in a way that conflicts with another worldview. The teacher asks the groups to discuss: “Could this have something to do with the way you focus a sermon on it with international listeners in mind?”

Large Groups

The leader will bring everyone back to the large group for a following discussion on how focusing on receiver/receptors will lead a preacher to discover an idea in the text.

Ideas In The Miracle Stories

Matthew 8:5-13

People from the east and west who have faith in Jesus would one day be having dinner with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at an eschatological time. Time is going somewhere. The leader will observe that this idea stands in contrast to the spinning wheel of animism.

Luke 9:10-17

The disciples could serve at their best in what might be called “overtime.” It didn’t have to be business as usual with everyone going home at the man-made time. There is God’s time. There is a divine moment when God works. The leader will observe this idea stands in contrast to a secular view of time.

Matthew 9:20-22

The woman who had been bleeding for twelve years did not think that time had doomed her. She didn’t have to live with a physical “punishment” forever on earth. The leader will observe that this idea stands in contrast to a fatalistic/status quo view of time in animism. Time is a concrete idea that demonstrates the superiority of the Biblical worldview.

Slide #38 Answering Questions About Your Text
What does this mean? How do Roman Centurions function?
Is it true? Don’t assume people believe in miracles.
What difference does it make? What is the relevance, application for today?

Figure 4.38 Answering Questions About Your Text

Slide 38 Preachers can also arrive at ideas by answering questions about the text. The basic developmental questions, according to chapter four in the book *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson are: “What does it mean, is it true, and what difference does it make?”²⁴ Often we connect with other ethnic groups by remembering to ask the “Is it true?” question. A good question to ask about each of these three passages has to do with miracles. For instance: “You may be wondering today if this story is true? Do miracles happen?” Here is a way to respond to that question, focusing on the idea of authority found in Matthew 8:5-13. “A miracle does not violate the laws of nature any more than a school principal violates the schedule of classes by cancelling gym for a special assembly.....if he modifies the schedule within the limits of his authority.”²⁵

Develop Appropriately

Slide #39 Develop Appropriately

Inductive or Deductive?

Let the text guide you

If it's: The Feeding of the Multitude
which might you choose?

Figure 4.39 Develop Appropriately

Slide #40 Develop Supporting Material

Restatement

Definition

Factual Information

Quotations

Narration

Illustration

From: *Biblical Preaching*, by Haddon Robinson, 140-147.

Figure 4.40 Develop Supporting Material

Slide 39 As the participants think of developing the sermon from the text they have been given, an important matter to decide is how it should be organized. Patterns in preaching tend to be deductive or inductive. The presenter asks the participants in the large group: How would you organize or outline your story's message, inductively or

²⁴ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 77-96.

²⁵ Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 111.

deductively? After some discussion the presenter observes that inductive is often the best choice for a narrative. Next the preacher will think about the supporting material for the outline being used. These choices will become part of the supporting material for your message on the assigned passage. Haddon Robinson describes six kinds of supporting material in his book *Biblical Preaching*.²⁶

Slide 40 These six categories from Haddon Robinson may be viewed through the prism of cross-cultural communication. As preachers develop supporting material they are considering how people from various ethnic backgrounds need to have the Bible explained. There is a tendency in preaching to leave out one or more of the types of supporting material. By carefully considering each one today we will see how a sermon's message will build a better bridge of communication when it uses a wider range of material to support its ideas.

Slide #41 Six Kinds of Supporting Material

1.) Restatement

How is this different from repetition?
In repetition you say the same thing by saying the same words. In restatement you say the same thing using different words.

Figure 4.41 Six Kinds of Supporting Material #1

Slide #42 Six Kinds of Supporting Material

2.) Definition and Explanation

If you're preaching from Romans 12 you can ask, "By the way, what does it mean when the Bible calls something *holy*?" The answer is, "Often it means the item, 'belongs to God.'"

Figure 4.42 Six Kinds of Supporting Material #2

Slide 41 Restatement gives the preacher an opportunity to say the same thing in a way that might be better understood with a different choice of words.

Slide 42 Definition and explanation helps the preacher unpack religious words that are hard to "decode."

²⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 140-157.

<p>Slide #43 Six Kinds of Supporting Material</p> <p>3.) Factual Information When Paul spoke to the Athenians in Acts 17 he quoted lines from two different Greek poems.</p> <p>Note: This is one of Paul's bridge-building methods.</p>	<p>Slide #44 Six Kinds of Supporting Material</p> <p>4.) Quotations "You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them." Bishop Desmond Tutu, Marriage Partnership, Vol. 7 No. 2</p>
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Figure 4.43 Six Kinds of Supporting Material #3

Figure 4.44 Six Kinds of Supporting Material #4

Slide 43 With factual information the preacher may be able help the listener understand the behavior of people in the scriptures that does not make sense to the modern mind.

Slide 44 Using quotations the preacher can inspire the heart of the receiver/receptor. The presenter asks: "Why quote Desmond Tutu?" Answer: Tutu is a world known leader.

<p>Slide #45 Six Kinds of Supporting Material</p> <p>5.) Narration <i>"Saul traveled with his companions on dusty roads over 200 kilometers northeast from Jerusalem to Damascus, but he made an unexpected stop before reaching his destination."</i></p>
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Figure 4.45 Six Kinds of Supporting Material #5

<p>Slide #46 Six Kinds of Supporting Material</p> <p>6.) Illustrations This is when we're saying something with a story or a thought that connects the idea with the audience.</p> <p>When we take abstract ideas and make them into particulars. Then the listener will say: "Now I see what you mean."</p>
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Figure 4.46 Six Kinds of Supporting Material #6

Slide 45 With narration the preacher can bring the story to life. Why say kilometers? The metric system is commonly utilized outside the U.S.

Slide 46 Illustrations help listeners "see" ideas. They illustrate from five different levels.

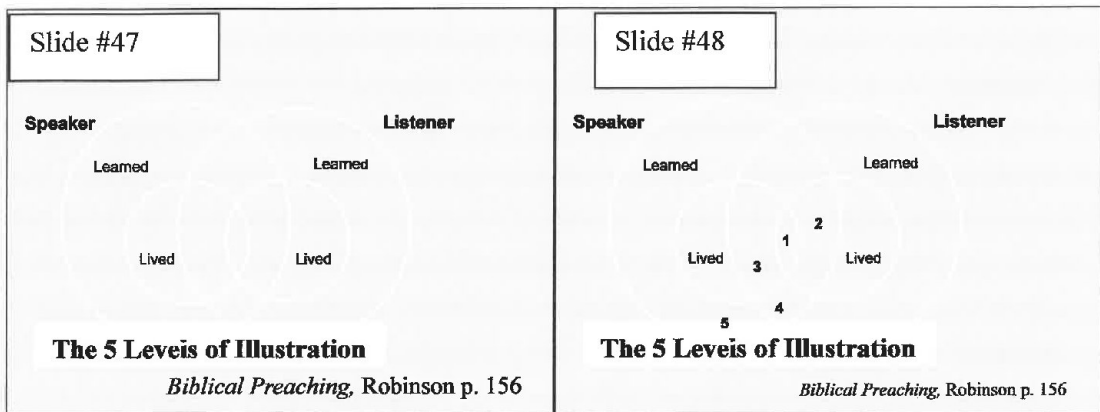


Figure 4.47 Levels of Illustration

Figure 4.48 Levels of Illustration Numbered

Slides 47 & 48 Illustrations should be selected for receptors from different ethnic groups by considering levels of shared experience and knowledge. Level 1 is shared experience. Level 2 is knowledge the speaker has gained about someone else's experience. Level 3 is what the listener has learned about something you've already experienced. Levels 4 and 5 are knowledge-based. Level 4 you and the receptors both know. Level 5 you know and you're teaching the receptors through that illustration. A story from the life of Augustine or Jonathan Edwards is potentially one of the weakest illustrations we can use. Most people would have to be told who it is we are talking about. To be effective a preacher may either use illustrations the whole world understands, or target the illustration to a culture, carefully explaining it.

Goal

<p>Slide #49 The Goal Is Transformation A Change of Mind</p> <p>"It is apparent that the 'change of mind' and 'renewing of the mind' involved in biblical conversion and Christian maturation is first and foremost a changed worldview. Whatever terms might be use, worldview change is intrinsic to discipleship." Hesselgrave, David, <i>Worldview, Scripture & Missionary Communication</i>, 79</p>	<p>Slide #50 The Goal Is Transformation A Change of Heart</p> <p>"If we are going to appeal to twenty-first century people's hearts, especially Asian-Americans, we must prepare our messages with the goal of transformation, not merely the transfer of information, clearly fixed before us." Fong, Ken, <i>Pursuing The Pearl</i>, 117</p>
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Figure 4.49 Change of Mind

Figure 4.50 Change of Heart

Slides 49 and 50 The goal of the message needs to be clarified. It involves a change of mind and heart. The presenter gives a handout with quotations on transformation. This handout is Appendix 3, located at the end of chapter four. After the first quotation the following table helps the participant to think critically about the relationship between worldview and transformation.²⁷ (Found in Thesis chapter 3, p.60)

TABLE 5. WORLDVIEWS

	Animism	Theism	Secularism
Ruler	Nature	God	Man
Perspective	Biocentric	Theocentric	Anthrocentric
Nature	Capricious	Open System	Closed System
Man	A Spirit	A Mind	A Mouth (highest animal)
Resources	Limited good	Positive Sum	Zero Sum
Man's role	Worshiper, victim	Steward, regent	Consumer/miner

Transformation is the common goal for all preaching. “Given that understanding it is apparent that the ‘change of mind’ and ‘renewing of the mind’ involved in biblical conversion and Christian maturation is first and foremost a changed worldview. Whatever terms might be used, worldview change is intrinsic to discipleship.”²⁸ “If we are going to appeal to twenty-first century people’s hearts, especially Asian Americans, we must prepare our messages with the goal of transformation, not merely the transfer of information, clearly fixed before us.”²⁹

Slide #51 The Goal Is Transformation

Change of Heart: Inspiration
Information, Variety, Application
Miller, Calvin Spirit, Word and Story

“It was a love story.”
Joy's Testimony

Figure 4.51 The Goal Is Transformation

²⁷ Darrow Miller, *Discipling Nations*, 36.

²⁸ David J. Hesselgrave, “Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication, *International Journal of Frontier Missions* Vol. 14:2 (Apr.-June 1997), 79.

²⁹ Ken Uyeda Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 126.

Slide 51 Fong, drawing from Miller says that transformation results from preaching with the following four ingredients: inspiration, information, variety, and application.³⁰ (See Thesis Chapter 3, p. 68.)

Joy is Chinese, a real estate agent in her 40s who spent twenty years studying Christianity. On the day Joy was baptized she said, “All my life I thought Christianity was about Bible study, then one day I realized it was a love story, a story of God’s love for me.” This is her written testimony that shows transformation through the heart.

I have graduated from a Catholic University in Taiwan. On campus I had joined the bible study and also had taken a 3 credit course on Bible study. Since then I have always clinged to studying the Bible. All those times I studied it in comparison of Confucianism and Taoism since I was so indoctrinated in Chinese culture by social, educational and cultural influence since childhood. You can find all moral rules and wisdom in Bible on human relationship of all levels, to family, community and states just like Confucius Analogue. All the time I did not realize that the God has sent His Son to earth with the message that He loves us all and gave up His son as sacrificing Lamb to cleanse our sins and give us the eternal life and live a meaningful life. Finally I sensed the great love story between God and humble humans like to seeds the farmers sowed; a lot of them fell out of sideways, rotten in wetland, eaten by the birds but a lot of them takes root on the dirt and grow with faith to Lord. They are the one who are blessed. It took me half of the life time to pursue and finally got enlightened and accepted His great love. Everything we have on earth is the endowment from Glorious Grace from God.

³⁰ Fong, *Pursuing The Pearl*, 126.

Editing

Slide #52 Editing

Communicating an Unchanging Message.

“Adapting the message does not mean changing the message as it is affirmed in the Scriptures. It requires, instead, that ability to focus historic truth on contemporary issues.”

Engel, James, *Contemporary Christian Communication*. 31.

Figure 4.52 Editing

Slide 52 “Adapting the message does not mean changing the message as it is affirmed in the Scriptures. It requires, instead, that ability to focus historic truth on contemporary issues.”³¹

Slide #53 Editing Is Building A Bridge

Ladder of Abstraction

Living Thing	Living Thing
Animal	Animal
Dog	Fish
Cocker Spaniel	Goldfish
Fido	Goldie

Higher levels of abstraction are more ambiguous. Lower levels are more clear and interesting. Litfin, Duane *Public Speaking*, 282.

Figure 4.53 Ladder of Abstraction

Slide #54 Editing Is Building A Bridge

Applying Ladder of Abstraction

Go as far down the ladder as you can while still being understood by the listeners who come from many cultures.

Person	Person
Roman Centurion	Soldier
Gentile	Non-Jew

The preaching context determines much of this. Ask for feedback.

Figure 4.54 Applying Ladder of Abstraction

Slides 53 and 54 The abstraction ladder allows preachers to make choices. They must attempt to go down the ladder as far as they can to be interesting and specific without losing the listeners.³² Preachers need to focus on ideas, words and principles that are expressed in ways that people throughout the world can connect. (Note to teacher: These two slides are to be referenced briefly and the participants should be encouraged to

³¹ Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communication: Its Theory and Practice*, 31.

³² Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2005), 282.

study the abstraction ladder on their own. The purpose of mentioning it is to use it as a tool for editing, not developing the sermon.)

Slide #55 Editing Is Building A Bridge

Writing a manuscript helps us edit.

Example: Could “in the loop” become “provided with information?” Could “too” which sounds like a number, become “also?”



Figure 4.55 Writing a Manuscript

Slide 55 Writing a manuscript allows the preacher to correct grammar and change words for more effective communication. For example: The idiom “in the loop” could be changed to “provided with information,” and/or “involved in the decision making process.”

Slide #56 Editing Is Building a Bridge
Categories

Numbers
Can you substitute the metric equivalent?
Geography
Have the listeners all been to Texas?
Culture
Do they know the expression, “Hit single?”

Figure 4.56 Categories

Slide 56 When editing the manuscript a preacher can ask questions about his/her sermon’s use of numbers (can you substitute the metric equivalent?), geography (Have they been to Texas?) and culture (Do they know the expression, “Hit single” in the way the preacher intends it. It can be a phrase describing a song on the radio or the action taking place in a baseball game.).

Slide 57 Editing reveals the preacher's tendencies to encode the message with his own culture. Bad habits for speakers are revealed in using idioms and abbreviations.

Slide #57 What To Watch For When Editing
Speakers Have Tendencies
Phrases/idioms
Abbreviations/slang
Bad grammar
Humor
Data/statistics
Let's focus specifically on the introduction.

Figure 4.57 When Editing

Slide #58 Editing Introductions
Build a bridge to the audience from Matthew 9:20-22
Instead of beginning:
"A woman with a bleeding problem came to Jesus."
How could you begin to build a bridge to your audience with the word "problem."
All people have problems, but some problems last for years.

Figure 4.58 Editing Introductions

Slide 58 An effective approach to editing would be to look carefully at the proposed introduction of a sermon. After a brief discussion on how to use the word, "problem" the participants are asked to look at their assigned text for an appropriate way to introduce the message and invited to make suggestions orally to the larger group.

Slide #59 So What Is The Bridge?
Bible
Receiver/receptor
Idea
Develop appropriately-*from* the text and *to* the listeners
Goal – change of heart
Edit to better connect

Figure 4.59 What is the Bridge?

Slide 59 The presenter will summarize the six parts in a system of preparation by using the word BRIDGE. After darkening the screen the presenter prompts the participants by asking them to remember what each letter stands for.

B stands for BIBLE
R stands for RECEIVER
I stands for IDEA
D stands for DEVELOP
G stands for GOAL
E stands for EDIT

The screen is turned back on to reveal the word BRIDGE.

Session Three Sermon Delivery

This third session begins with the participants seated at tables. Each person continues to have a prepared folder. The presenter is using power point. The participants' folders contain notes pages, three pictures to a page for each of the three workshop sessions. (Notes pages from the power point presentation are in the appendix following the curriculum.)

Goals and Objectives

Slide #60 Session 3 Delivering The Sermon

The purpose of this session is for the participants to learn the two general practices of sermon delivery where improvement will result in delivering effective cross-cultural sermons.

Objectives: The participant is to:

1. Be able to list the effective practices of verbal and nonverbal delivery.
2. Know how to obtain feedback on his/her delivery by using an evaluation form.

Slide #61 Verbal Sermon Delivery

Speak Slowly

Speak Clearly

Tell Stories

Use Understandable (shorter) Words

Minimize Cliches, Sarcasm & Idioms

Avoid Negative Comparison

Watch Use of Humor



Figure 4.60 Delivering The Sermon

Figure 4.61 Verbal Sermon Delivery

Slide 60 The goal of this session is for the participants to learn the two general practices of sermon delivery where improvement may result in delivering effective cross-cultural sermons.

Objective 1: The participant is to be able to list the effective practices of verbal and nonverbal delivery.

Objective 2: The participant is to know how to gain feedback on his/her sermon delivery by using an evaluation form.

Verbal Communication

Slide 61 Verbal delivery is improved when the speaker does the following:

Speaks slowly, speaks clearly, tells stories, uses understandable (shorter) words, minimizes clichés, sarcasm and idioms, avoids negative comparisons, and uses humor sparingly/sensitively.

The presenter asks the participants for examples of idioms. A few are shared by the presenter from the American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms. (This book should be available on a resource table with other books on preaching and communication. The presenter should consult the Bibliography for samples.) An example is: “In the nick of time.” The presenter mentions how many idioms start with “in the,” and passes the book around the group for observation.³³

Slide 62 Can sarcasm, clichés, slang, and idioms sometimes help build a bridge?

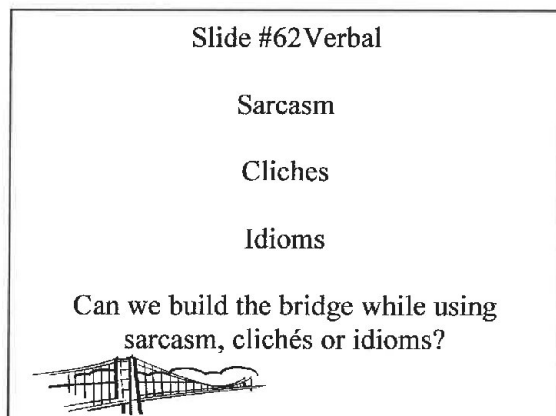


Figure 4.62 Verbal: Sarcasm, Cliches, Idioms

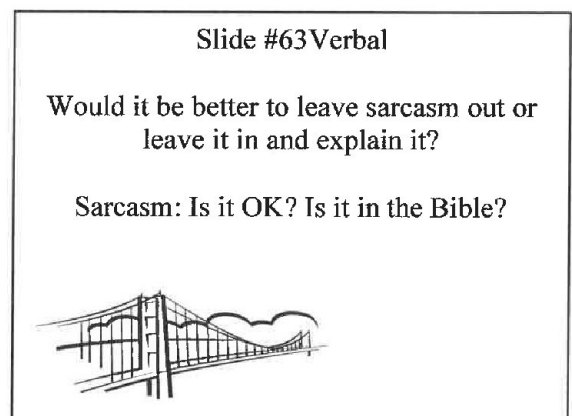


Figure 4.63 Verbal: Better To Leave In?

Slide 63 Would it be better to take sarcasm out or leave it in and explain it? A question for the large group: Where in the Bible do people use sarcasm? (I Kings 18:27 is a possible example.)

³³ Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1997), 222.

Nonverbal Communication

Slide #64 Sermon Delivery - Nonverbal

It is widely believed that 93% of meaning in conversation is transmitted nonverbally.

“Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously.”



Dodd, Carley, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 135

Figure 4.64 Nonverbal Sermon Delivery

Slide 64 Nonverbal communication impacts sermon delivery. It is widely believed that 93% of meaning in conversation is transmitted nonverbally. “Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously.”³⁴

Slide 65 Myron Chartier places nonverbal communication in four categories: Body, voice, objects and environment.³⁵ The presenter asks the participants: How is voice considered nonverbal? Answer: Tone and volume.

Slide 66 There are gestures to be avoided. The presenter asks the participants to suggest some in addition to finger pointing and the OK sign.

Slide #65 Nonverbal Communication

Categories

Body

Voice

Objects

Environment



Chartier, Myron.
Preaching and Communication, 85

Figure 4.65 Nonverbal Communication

Slide #66 Gestures

What Gestures Should We Avoid?

Finger-pointing

Hands in pockets

OK sign

What gestures should we substitute?

Figure 4.66 Gestures

³⁴ Carley Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 135.

³⁵ Myron Chartier, *Preaching As Communication* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1981), 85.

Participants are asked to record these and consider what others gestures could be substituted. If possible the presenter should invite a person to attend the seminar who can speak to this issue. An ideal guest would be a person who is from a different country who both understands and can explain gestures which are potentially offensive to listeners. The guest could be invited to explain one or more of these gestures at this time.

Slide #67 Occulesics	
Perceived intention when we widen our eyes.	
Anglo	Surprise
Chinese	Anger
French	Challenge
Hispanic	Call for help
African American	Persuasion
Dodd, Carley. <i>Dynamics of Intercultural Communication</i> , 139	

Figure 4.67 Occulesics

Slide 67 The challenges of multiple cultures misinterpreting a message are amplified by the use of our eyes. Occulesics, what we do with our eyes, can be understood in a variety of different ways, depending upon the cultures represented. A comparison follows of how four cultures react to the widening of the speaker's eyes.

Review In Small Groups

Slide #68 Effective Practices	
<u>Verbal Categories</u>	
Speak Slowly, Speak Clearly	
Tell Stories, Use Understandable (shorter)	
Words, Minimize Cliches,	
Sarcasm & Idioms, Avoid Negative	
Comparisons, Watch Use of Humor	
<u>Nonverbal Categories</u>	
Body, Voice, Objects, Environment	

Figure 4.68 Effective Practices

Slide 68 The presenter asks the small groups to meet one last time for approximately ten minutes to review the two effective practices of verbal and nonverbal

sermon delivery. As the participants list each item of the two categories they should indicate specific practices they will attempt to improve.

Large Group

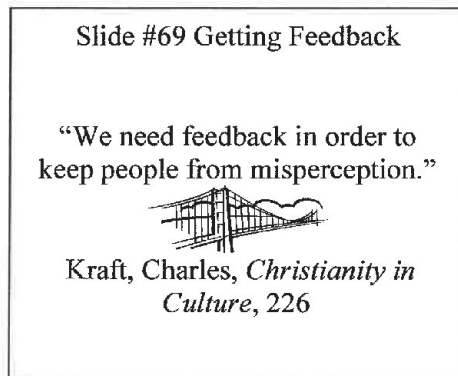


Figure 4.69 Getting Feedback

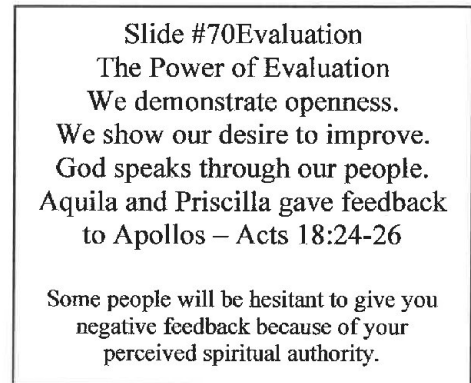


Figure 4.70 Evaluation

Slide 69 Kraft says feedback will improve communication. “We need feedback in order to keep people from misperception.”³⁶ Feedback often comes in conversation.

Slide 70 But there is power from formal evaluation that helps the preacher to become more effective. Asking for feedback says so much to the listeners about the desire in the pastor to improve the quality of the preaching. Evaluations help preachers discover how effectively they are preparing and how well they are delivering. Seminar participants are cautioned that some people may hesitate in giving negative feedback to a pastor because they honor the pastoral office and do not feel it is appropriated to criticize sermons. Anonymity facilitates feedback.

At this time the presenter passes out a sermon evaluation form and explains how it is to be filled out by listeners of sermons, encouraging anonymity. (This evaluation is Appendix 4) The evaluation is explained section by section. Participants are encouraged

³⁶ Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 226.

to use an evaluation like this at the close of a worship service once or twice a year, asking members and attendees of their churches to complete the form immediately after a sermon is preached. Participants are advised to recruit an appropriate person to collect the evaluations and organize the data.

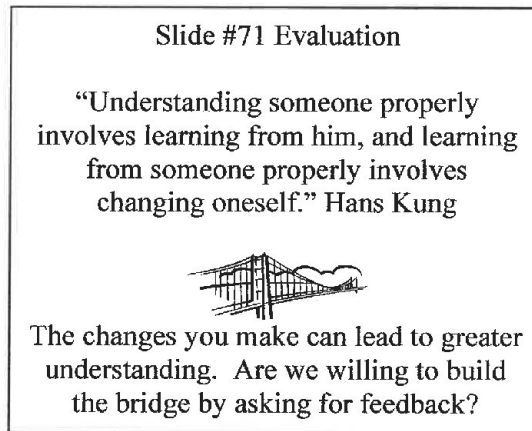


Figure 4.71 Evaluation H. Kung

Slide 71 Quoting H. Kung, the presenter says: The changes made in delivery can lead to greater understanding.³⁷ Are we willing to build bridges by asking for feedback?

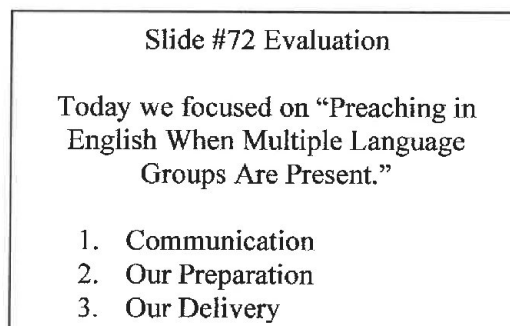


Figure 4.72 Seminar Review

Review

Slide 72 Review of the day: Today we focused on "Preaching In English When Multiple Language Groups Are Present"

³⁷ Edward K. Rowell, 1001 Quotes, *Illustrations and Humorous Stories* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), p. 144.

1. Communication
2. Our Preparation
3. Our Delivery

Slide 73 The question for the participant is: What will I do because of today?

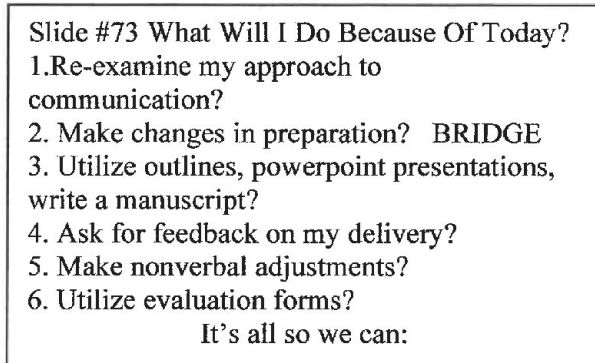


Figure 4.73 What Will I Do Because of Today?

1. Re-examine my approach to communication?
2. Make changes in preparation, using the system of the BRIDGE?
3. Utilize outlines, powerpoint presentations, manuscripts?
4. Ask for feedback on my delivery?
5. Make nonverbal adjustments?
6. Utilize evaluation forms?

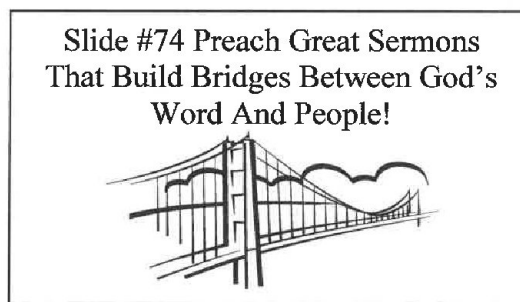


Figure 4.74 Preach Great Sermons

Slide 74 The presenter implores the participants to make changes that will result in great sermons that build bridges between God's word and people. The presenter asks the participants to complete an evaluation form located in the folder. He asks if the participants will please check the final two sentences to indicate they have signed the covenant, and will be willing to seek feedback in preaching. Filling this out will require

three to five minutes to complete so they may then turn it in to the presenter before departing. He collects the evaluations immediately.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

The project material was written in the summer of 2010. On July 25 and August 1, 2010 I preached at Mt. Washington Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio where I serve as Pastor. For these two occasions I developed and used the sermon evaluation form that is Appendix 4. I received helpful feedback from many people in the congregation. Some of the most helpful information came from a Korean attendee who provides translation at some area churches where Koreans attend. On August 1 our church hosted 17 representatives from the Calvary Baptist Church, a new Chin tribe congregation in our Association. All these Christians came to the U.S. as refugees from the Myanmar/Thailand border. Most of our guests spoke English. Their Pastor helped me lead the communion service. The entire group gave special music as an offering. We gave them gifts of rice to welcome them into our community. They were reluctant to evaluate my preaching. Two weeks later I had the privilege of preaching at their church through the pastor's translation. These experiences were fresh in my heart as I prepared the notes for the seminar August 19, 2010.

I gave this seminar to American Baptist pastors on three occasions. On August 19, 2010 I led the seminar at the Wyoming Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. On September 23, 2010 and February 24, 2011 I presented it at Camp Kirkwood in Wilmington, Ohio. All three events were conducted from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A lunch was given to the attendees at the close of each seminar. The attendance at each event ranged from nine to sixteen people. Thirty-six people have attended the three seminars.

In every presentation I used power point and provided participants with a folder containing pictures and notes pages. The first occasion of this seminar I recruited people in advance to serve as group facilitators and gave them the information for those sessions beforehand. The small groups had five to six people in them. In September and February I used smaller groups of three to four people and let them function without formal leaders. In the future I will return to using formal leaders and ask them to help me measure the success of reaching the objectives. I hope to meet with these leaders in the afternoon following the close of the seminar.

Between the first two presentations the material was essentially unchanged because I failed to seek feedback. But there were changes that took place between the second and third seminars. In personal conversation with participants it became obvious to me that the goals were fuzzy. In preparation for the February seminar I made modifications to the goals for each session. In the February presentation it was the first time that I stated and used objectives to help reach the goals. This led to the creation of handouts that were more specific and effective. The February seminar was also the first time I asked the small groups to work with a specific passage for the entire morning. As a result of this decision the dialogue between participants demonstrated greater desire to immediately apply what they were learning. As I walked around the room, listening to the discussions it was easy to observe the increased application of the material that had just been presented. There was greater enthusiasm. Participants were responding to each other's ideas with positive and negative feedback. The participants sounded as if they wanted to go home and preach the texts we were examining.

In every seminar I invited some people who have had experience preaching in English in international churches and in mission fields. In the August seminar we benefited from input by a retired missionary, John Bascom. At my request John had led a discussion on multi-cultural ministry with area pastors in March, 2010. His work is cited in chapter three of the thesis. In the September and February seminars there was a Guatemalan Pastor, Tulio Minera who gave the group information on nonverbal communication from the Latino perspective.

At each seminar I provided a book table with the following books available for attendees to examine during the break times:

Ammer, Christine *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1997.

Crystal, David, *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge, MA: University Press, 2009

Dodd, Carley H. *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

Fong, Ken Uyeda. *Pursuing the Pearl*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1999.

Jeter, Joseph R. and Ronald J. Allen. *One Gospel, Many Ears*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002.

Litfin, Duane, *Public Speaking*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2005.

Miller, Darrow L. *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*. Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1998.

Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989.

Nieman, James R., and Thomas G. Rogers. *Preaching To Every Pew*.

Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

Pillai, Rajendra K. *Reaching The World In Our Own Backyard*. Colorado

Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2003.

Robinson, Haddon. *Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic,

2007.

Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Stott, John, *Between Two Worlds*. Grand Rapids, MI. William B. Eerdmans

Publishing Co. 1982.

Troeger, Thomas H. *Preaching and Worship*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press,

2003.

The testimonies in the presentations from sessions one and two are written in a way that someone else can use the material. These stories are from my personal ministry experience. The Nigerian family is from the Mt. Washington Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. The naming ceremony took place in May, 2010. The Asian couple I invited to the new members class is from a church I planted about fifteen years ago. Joy is a person I baptized in July, 2009. Her conversion made a powerful impact on my commitment to the topic of cross-cultural preaching.

A mistake I have made in all three seminars is that I did not include the places on the evaluation for people to check if they had signed the covenant and if they would make a commitment to receiving feedback on preaching. The first seminar was comprised of attendees of who have a background and interest in multi-cultural ministry. My assumption that I did not need to seek a commitment in this area was based on my

personal knowledge of the attendees. After my second presentation I realized that the average attendee, one that is not carefully selected, would bring different expectations. As I address more Pastors it is less likely that they will bring a commitment to seeking feedback for how to improve their communication skills. I have since added this as a way of measuring the success in reaching the goals of the seminar, and intend to make fewer assumptions about the attendees.

Oral feedback from the participants has helped in making revisions to the material. Some of the helpful feedback I have received:

Lengthen the seminar to develop the same material more carefully.
Explore the role that prayer plays in the process of preparing sermons.
Talk about how the context of the worship service impacts preaching.

I was able to point attendees to the books that would address the issues we did not cover. It is a goal of mine to create a resource page which has common questions on the topic and where to find the answers.

February 24, 2011 was the first seminar when I used the evaluation form, Appendix 5, for the seminar. Evaluation scores averaged 4.8 on each statement. I received a great deal of positive feedback regarding my enthusiasm for the topic. I invited the attendees to make written suggestions on how to improve the seminar. Unfortunately the majority of what was written simply complimented the three presentations. However, some suggestions for each session are as follows:

Session One

1. Deal with how the preacher is perceived in a different culture.

2. Talk more on the preacher being committed, excited and inspiring with the message.
3. Expand for a longer time period. It is too condensed.
4. Talk about how to communicate the word “sin.”

Session Two

1. How do old hymns translate into other cultures?
2. Talk about the role of prayer.

Session Three

1. Balance the time to give equal to all three sessions. Session three was shortened.
2. Encourage people to preach “good” rather than “great” sermons.

In the future I will change the evaluation form to ask which of the three sessions was most helpful and why. I wonder this because the oral feedback from all three presentations suggests that session two is the most helpful and should be made longer, perhaps by shortening session one and/or two. During the seminar the topic of worship was raised more than once. If this seminar were to be lengthened I would enjoy exploring how the worship context enhances preaching when multiple language groups are present. I have a list of songs for worship that is under compilation. There is source material in the book, *Preaching To Every Pew*, that addresses the worship context. With this information I am crafting a handout on worship I will include in my next seminar to distribute during session three. If it stimulates very much discussion it will become a stand-alone session four and will be utilized at a future presentation. Showing video of a

preaching event will help to showcase this final topic and help the seminar to end on a very exciting note.

I have three possible ways before me in how to use this seminar in the next few years. The first method will be to present the material before pastors in the way I have been currently using it. I have the potential to teach this seminar in the Cleveland Baptist Association later this year. Our Area Minister has been with me and could help to schedule some other city/Association presentations with pastors using similar venues and schedules.

A second method would be to incorporate the material into the Leadership Academy of the American Baptist Churches of Ohio. Ben Peer, an attendee in my February 2011 seminar asked if I would be interested in teaching the material at the academy. I responded positively and he is going to explore the possibility with the faculty. The Leadership Academy is a program that prepares people for ministry in churches that are too small to employ a full time pastor. Graduates often serve in bi-vocational ministry or in intentional interim ministry.

A third way of sharing the material is with the wider family of the ABC/USA. I have enjoyed some preliminary conversations with our Director of Intercultural Ministries, Rev. Brenda Halliburton. She is interested in helping me develop the seminar and connect me with ministries for which she provides resources. This connection will be a way for me to learn from other people working in the area of cross-cultural communication here in the United States.

APPENDIX 1

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AND SERMON PREPARATION NOTES

Session One:

1. What experiences, signs or indicators have you seen in your recent ministry that makes you realize how important it is to communicate more effectively with people for whom English is a second language?
2. Reflect on your own preaching. What words or phrases do you often use that might not make sense to someone for whom English is a second language?
3. Sequence of Communication:

_____ (Preacher)

_____ (What's being

communicated)

_____ (How he/she communicates)

_____ (to whom it's addressed)

Session Two

1. Talk about the scripture that is assigned to you:

Matthew 8:5-13

Luke 9:10-17

Matthew 9:20-22

2. What is the idea of this story?

Use the audience grid to imagine a person in your church.

	Home	Work	School	Church	Subculture
Children					
Single					
Married					
Divorced					
Widowed					

3. Choose one of the five from the first column and place the person in a subculture that is ethnic. Spanish, Asian, Native American, or African, and reflect on what part of the miracle story a person from this background might find a connection.

4. How does this passage refer to time in a way that could put the Bible's worldview into tension with a different worldview? Could this have something to do with the way you focus a sermon on it with international listeners in mind?

5. How would you organize or outline your story's message: inductively or deductively?

6. How would you support this message? What type of material would you use?

7. What is the bridge for preparing effective sermons that communicate cross-culturally?

B _____ R _____ I _____

D _____ G _____ E _____

8. My idea for an introduction to the sermon.

Session Three

9. My idea for a conclusion to the sermon.

APPENDIX 2

PREACHING ACROSS CULTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

New Testament preaching carried a message like nothing before it. “Christianity burst on the world with all the suddenness of good news: good news proclaimed with great enthusiasm and courage by its advocates, and backed up with their own witness and experience.”¹ The verb *euaggelizesthai* is found fifty-two times in the New Testament.² It was a message Jesus referred to as the gospel, and it was to be “preached to all nations” (Mark 13:10 [NIV]). What Jesus had called “good news” was nothing less than the fulfillment of a prophecy found in Isaiah 61 which Jesus read aloud in a synagogue service described in Luke 4:14-30. After reading, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Jesus announced, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21) Nothing would ever be the same again.

The book of Acts is replete with examples of preaching in primarily one language from one culture to another culture. This preaching did not ask potential converts to join an ethnic group or adopt a set of cultural norms. It compelled listeners to serve the creator God in a new culture, the kingdom of God, which establishes common ground between all people. Disciples of Jesus Christ came together as Churches in their own cities. In many instances those congregations began with a mix of Jews, Proselytes and Gentiles who confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The message preached did not

¹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), 48.

² David Watson, *I Believe in Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 26.

require circumcision. This put the Church at odds with Jews who believed that more should be required of converts than simple belief. But the evangelists and missionaries would not adjust the message to accommodate these expectations. "...Paul's pre-eminent contribution to the world has been his presentation of the good news of free grace – as he himself would have put it (rightly), his re-presentation of the good news explicit in Jesus' teaching and embodied in his life and work."³

In summary we may conclude that the message of the gospel was effectively communicated across cultures by the first witnesses. It was communicated effectively because of the use of a primary language, Greek, to penetrate communities which were non-Jewish. It was successful because the message was adapted to the audience by the witnesses who brought it. It was successful because it maintained and presented a core of basic beliefs that were understandable by all and non-negotiable. What can we summarize about the preaching of the gospel?

It was a *universal message*. Everyone is created by God. (Acts 17:24) Everyone has sinned. (Romans 3:23) Everyone participated in the crucifixion of Jesus, including the Gentiles. (Acts 4:27) Everyone is loved by God so that He sent his Son into the whole world that by believing in Him we might have life rather than condemnation. (John 3:16-17) For these reasons the gospel was preached from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

It was a *comprehensive message*. It appealed to the mind, the heart, and the conscience. The message addressed the mind of the atheist and polytheist by arguing for a creator God evidenced in the matchless teaching and ministry in Jesus Christ. The message addressed the heart by challenging the myths and fables of gods already doubted

³ F.F. Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing 1988), 18.

by the modern minds of the first century. The message addressed the conscience by striking out against the immorality produced by the historic systems of thought and the present practices of people in the Roman Empire. It was delivered by preachers whose integrity and morality were beyond reproach.⁴

It was a *powerful message*. The Apostles relied on the Holy Spirit to transform their words and imbue their preaching with power from on high. “The Spirit was given to make them missionaries and proclaimers of the good news.”⁵ Paul confessed his reliance upon God’s Spirit “...in weakness and fear and much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom but on God’s power.” (1 Corinthians 2:3-2) This spiritual power exerted its force over principalities and powers. “What Jesus had begun to do then, he was continuing now through his Apostles. You do not need many healed cripples to amaze the authorities!”⁶

It was a *portable message*. Sermons were preached in temple areas, synagogues, and homes, beside rivers and near altars to pagan gods. This is not to say that place has no importance. If we have learned anything about preaching in Acts we have discovered that preachers must at times move locations to have a context that is free from adversity in the forms of Jewish attack or evil spirits. For what is good news in an eternal sense may not be good news for some in a temporal sense. Conflict is the result of preaching that crosses cultures and disturbs norms. To reach the world the message was always on the move.

⁴ Michael Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2002), 81.

⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Spirit, The Church and the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 29-45.

⁶ Michael Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World*, 66.

It was a *personal message*. We can tie the message of the resurrection to the messengers. How else do we account for the Apostles' bold preaching lives other than the transforming impact of the resurrection? "Their fearlessness in proclaiming the gospel demands an adequate explanation and no approach to the resurrection is tenable which does not account for this transformation."⁷ Paul's preaching was a testimony of who he was before and after Christ. Key to the testimony was proclaiming Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy. So foundational was this to preaching that this appeal was made to King Agrippa. "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." (Acts 26:27) "Agrippa did not dare become a Christian, but Paul's approach was faultless. He told the narrative of what had brought him to faith and the difference it had made, and then challenged the King to make a similar response."⁸

It was an *ongoing message*. The gospel was larger than any one person and would need to be preached in the generations to follow the apostles. Individuals like Timothy and Titus would follow Peter, Barnabas, Paul and Silas in proclamation of the message. Preachers from a Gentile background would be instrumental in the gospel taking root in cross cultural situations.

It was a *transforming message*. It transformed individuals and groups. The gospel message announced how Jesus broke down the dividing wall between the Jews and the Gentiles symbolized by the Temple area in Jerusalem. (Eph 2:14-15) Here is the heart of cross-cultural preaching. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female...." (Gal 3:28) As it transformed groups of people it brought about spiritual

⁷ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 377.

⁸ Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World*, 114, 115.

transformation within people. Through repentance and faith people became citizens of another kingdom. (Philippians 3:20)

It was an *unchanging message*. However scripture was clothed for the sake of the culture receiving its witness, the word of God was a truth that could not be changed.

“What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Jesus Christ. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” (2 Timothy 1:13-14) The Holy Spirit’s aid in guardianship was important to Timothy and others as the gospel reached more people from non-Jewish cultures. In transmitting the message, its preachers had to retain the core of its truth, thereby protecting it from syncretism. If not for the protection of the Holy Spirit, teaching could creep into the Church and distort the message at a variety of levels, including the person and work of Christ.

APPENDIX 3

CHANGE OF MIND, CHANGE OF HEART

“...it is apparent that the ‘change of mind’ and ‘renewing of the mind’ involved in biblical conversion and Christian maturation is first and foremost a changed worldview. Whatever terms might be used, worldview change is intrinsic to discipleship.”

David Hesselgrave, “Worldview, Scripture and Missionary Communication, *International Journal of Frontier Missions* Vol. 14:2 (Apr.-June 1997), p. 79.

WORLDVIEW (Table 3. found in Thesis chapter 3, p. 61.)

<u>NATURE</u>	ANIMISM	THEISM	SECULARISM
Perspective	Biocentric	Theocentric	Anthrocentric
Nature	Capricious	Open System	Closed System
Man	A Spirit	A Mind	A Mouth highest animal
Resources	Limited good	Positive Sum	Zero Sum
Man's role	Worshiper, victim	Steward, regent	Consumer/miner

Table From: Darrow Miller, *Discipling Nations*, Publications, Seattle, WA: YWAM Publications, 1998, p. 36.

“If we are going to appeal to twenty-first century people's hearts, especially Asian Americans, we must prepare our messages with the goal of transformation, not merely the transfer of information, clearly fixed before us.” Ken Fong, *Pursuing the Pearl*, Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1999, p. 126

“We must recognize, first of all, that the aim of the popular teacher in Jesus' time was not to impart information, but to make a significant change in the lives of the hearers.” Dallas Willard Quoted by: Ken Fong, *Pursuing the Pearl*, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999, p. 126

APPENDIX 4

SERMON EVALUATION

Personal Information

Circle answers that describe you:

1. Age: -18 19-29 30-45 46-69 70+
2. Gender: Male Female
3. How long you have been a Christian:
-2 years 2-10 years 11-20 years 20+years Not yet a Christian
4. English is my 1st language English is my 2nd language

Evaluation

Rate 5-1 with 5 meaning *strongly agree* and 1 meaning *strongly disagree*

Sermon Content

- ☐ The message accurately explained the Biblical text
- ☐ I was able to follow the main ideas of the message
- ☐ I learned something new from the Bible through the message
- ☐ The word illustrations helped me understand the message
- ☐ The message held my attention all the way to the end.
- ☐ The message helped me to apply the Bible in my own life

Sermon Delivery

- ☐ The speaker's eye contact was effective
- ☐ The speaker's arm/hand gestures were appropriate
- ☐ The speaker's standing/walking movement was appropriate
- ☐ The speed/pace of the vocal delivery was effective
- ☐ The volume/tone of the vocal delivery was effective
- ☐ The speaker's appearance was appropriate

People who speak English as a second language might not have understood _____

People who speak English as a second language would have been helped more by the sermon's: Content? Or the delivery? (circle one or the other)

People who speak English as a second language would have felt included and important by the way this sermon was delivered.

Circle: Yes or No

The humor would have been understood by people from a variety of cultures.

Circle: Yes or No

The word illustrations and analogies would have communicated well across a variety of cultures.

Circle: Yes or No

Suggestions for the future: Preaching could be better understood by people from other language groups if the preacher would:

Please place this form in the basket at the Welcome Center. Thanks for your help today.

APPENDIX 5

SEMINAR EVALUATION 2011

Please place a number next to the following sentences from 5-1 with 5 meaning *strongly agree* and 1 meaning *strongly disagree*.

_____ This seminar helped me reach its intended goals and objectives.

_____ This seminar gave me information and tools that could help me become a more effective preacher with listeners from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

_____ I would recommend this seminar to a colleague.

To improve future presentations of this seminar I would suggest:

On Communication

On Preparing Effective Sermons

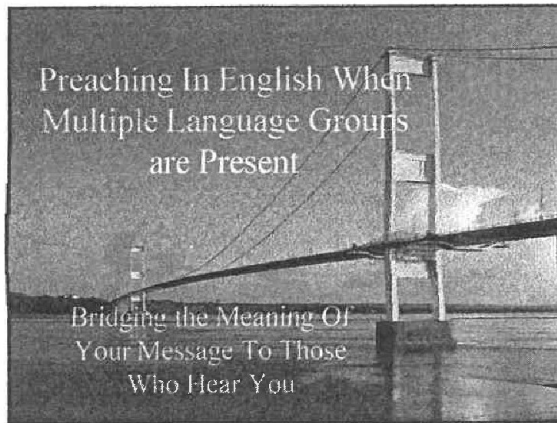
On Delivering Effective Sermons

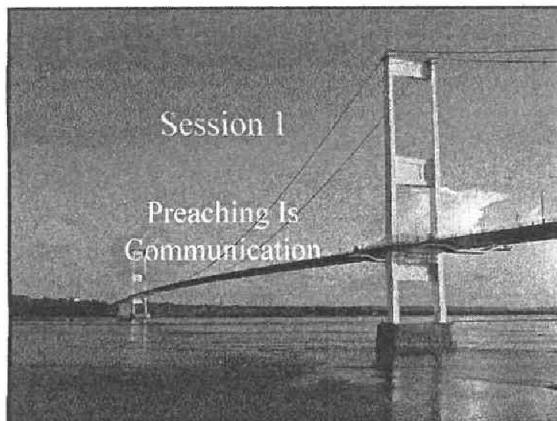
_____ I signed the Covenant.

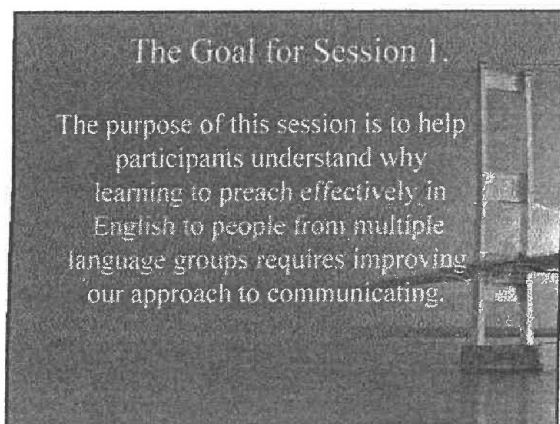
_____ I will seek feedback on my sermons to evaluate my delivery.

APPENDIX 6

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION FOR SEMINAR







Today

"Churches are under stress because they are nowadays called to minister in a society of multiple cultures and hence multiple ritual traditions."

Troeger, Thomas *Preaching and Worship*, p. 7

What is our denomination telling us?

What about mission trips? Campus ministry? Ministry with youth/children?

Today's Challenge Reminds Us of the Challenge Faced by the Apostles

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

The command and challenge were always present. They obeyed the command and met the challenge through preaching.

Preaching in Acts The Gospel Message Was:

- Universal
- Personal
- Comprehensive
- Ongoing
- Powerful
- Transforming
- Portable
- Unchanging

Universal, Unchanging

"The theological premise of Acts is that Jesus is Lord of all, and so the gospel can go to all."

Bock, Darrell, *Acts*, p. 759.

"What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Jesus Christ. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you..." II Timothy 1:13-14

Messages For Two Different People

An Ethiopian heard from Philip
Acts 8:26-40

Sergius Paulus heard from Saul
(Paul) Acts 13:4-12

Same message, delivered in
different ways.

Why?

Preaching Is Communication

Building a bridge from then to now.

Building a bridge to others.

"It is because preaching is not exposition only but communication, not just the exegesis of a text, but the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it..." Stott, John, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 137.

There is a process to communication.

The Process of Communication

1. Source/Encoder (Preacher)
2. Message (What's being communicated)
3. Code and Channel (How he/she communicates)
4. Receiver (to whom it's addressed)

Ston, John R.W. *Between Two Worlds*.
Eerdmans Publishing, p. 81

The Receiver in the Process

1. Source/Encoder
2. Message
3. Code and Channel
4. Receiver

From a different ethnic group
Speaks a different language, but...
Understands the speaker's language
So...what's the problem?

Problems For International Listeners

1. Religious language hard to "decode."
Jeter, Joseph & Allen, Ronald
One Gospel Many Ears, p. 119
What are some difficult words?
2. "The paper is not blank. The new message
is placed on top of messages already heard
and believed."
Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding*, p. 78
Fortunately we can do this in English!

English Widely Used

"There has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English." David Crystal, *English As A Global Language*, Cambridge Publishing, p. 189

English is to contemporary preaching what Greek was to Apostolic preaching. The language is used for...

English by an African Novelist

If the African world is communicating through English, *"I feel that English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience... But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings."* (Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe) Crystal, David, p. 184

But English Can Mean Different Things to Different People

"Meaning is in people, not the words." Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding* p. 51

"Words and meanings are personal. They are our property. Meanings are in us, so it's possible for us to forget them, distort them and change them."

Fortner, Robert *Communication Media and Identity*, p. 83

We May Be Out of Date

"When we move to religious language, the problems multiply. First, we may find ourselves using archaic or outdated language that has lost its meaning for people today."

Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding*, p. 119

International Listeners and the Bible

"It is only natural that ethnic groups who derive the preacher's authority from Biblical authority would expect the preaching event to be profoundly stamped by scripture. Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching To Every Pew*, p. 42

But...

"We need to make sure it doesn't come across as just another book about religion." Newbigin, Lesslie, *The Gospel In A Pluralistic Society*, p. 90

Truth

"One of the great difficulties is to keep before the audience's mind the question of Truth. They always think you are recommending Christianity not because it is *true* but because it is *good*. And in the discussion they will at every moment try to escape from the issue 'True-or False' into stuff about a good society or morals..." Lewis, C.S. *God In The Dock*, p. 101

Truth

"Part of maintaining our adherence to the truth demands that we do not reduce Christianity to the lowest common denominator of pragmatism."

Gibson, Scott. "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching," in the book *Preaching Across Cultures*, p. 190, Edited by Jeffrey Arthurs

It's More Than Words

It is widely believed that 93% of meaning in conversation is transmitted non-verbally.

"Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously." Dodd, Carley. *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, 134-135

What we say mustn't be contradicted by what else is going on in and around us.

High Context vs. Low Context

Low Context-Primary thing is words.

High Context-Primary thing is nonverbal.

Eccles. 6:1 "The more the words the less the meaning."

John 1:14 "The word became flesh."

Which cultures are High Context?

Pillai, Rajendra K. *Reaching The World In Our Own Backyard*.

Is Effective Communication Possible? Yes!

"Absolute communication is not possible, nevertheless effective communication is always possible between people of different cultural backgrounds." Why?

- The process of human reasoning is essentially the same, irrespective of cultural diversity.

Is It Possible? Yes!

- All people have a common range of human experiences.
- All people possess the capacity for at least some adjustment to the symbolic "grids" of others.

Webber, Robert *God Still Speaks*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980, p. 88.

The Sequence of Communication

1. _____ (Preacher)
2. _____ (What's being communicated)
3. _____ (How he/she communicates)
4. _____ (to whom it's addressed)

Stott, John R.W. *Between Two Worlds*, Eerdmans Publishing, p. 81

Effective Communication

Focuses on the listener

"We must follow the example of Jesus
and begin our communication in
terms of where people are and not
where we would like them to be."

James Engel

*Contemporary Christian Communication: Its
Theory and Practice* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson
Publishers, 1979), 287.

We Are Witnesses – Acts 1:8

Notice Peter's words in Acts 10:28-43

"...to associate with any Gentile."

*"God accepts people from every
nation."*

"We are witnesses of everything he did."

We cross bridges, but first Jesus crossed
the biggest bridge to come to us.

"He commanded us to preach
to the people..."

Acts 10:42

Preaching is the Bridge.

Covenant

I will build a bridge to people in ministry by thinking about the ones who listen to me preach. Like Jesus I will begin with people where they are and do my best, by God's grace to communicate effectively with all people in my congregation.

Session 2

Preparing Effective Sermons

The Goal for Session 2.

The purpose of this session is to help participants know how to use a system for preparing sermons that effectively communicate to people for whom English is a second language.

Objectives: With an assigned scripture the participant will be able to: 1) determine its idea, 2) connect the idea to a multi-ethnic audience, 3) develop appropriate material to support the message.

Bible

- The advantage of narratives.
If we want to teach like Jesus...
- Notice the examples of the Apostles preaching in Acts. (Retelling their stories and experiences with Jesus.)
- Making the familiar unfamiliar?

Fong, Ken *Pursuing the Pearl*, Judson Press

What Is This Story About?

- Jesus heals the servant of the Centurion.
- Jesus feeds the multitude.
- A woman is healed by touching Jesus' garment.

What is this story about?

Jesus heals, Jesus feeds, Jesus is the source
of healing power

What is it saying?

Jesus heals because of... Jesus feeds in
response to...

Remember Your Audience

"We must follow the example of Jesus
and begin our communication in
terms of where people are and not
where we would like them to be."

Engel, James, *Contemporary
Christian Communication*, p. 287

Since we're communicating, consider
using audience grids to help
determine who your receptors are.

Worldview

"A worldview is a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in faith about the basic makeup of the world and how the world works."

Miller, Darrow *Discipling Nations*, p. 36

A different worldview will cause you to hear the same data differently.

Worldviews on Time

Animism	Secularism	Theo-centric
sees time	sees time	sees time
as cyclical:	as an:	as a:
Wheel	Hourglass	Course

Status Quo	Running Out	Progress
------------	-------------	----------

Worldview Issues

Ideas:
Time

Words:
Steward/servant

Principles:
"You have been faithful with a little ..."
Matthew 25:21

An Idea That Connects

- Subject/complement. What is the passage about? What is it saying about it?
- If you can't say it in one sentence, neither can your audience.
- Put your idea through contrasting worldviews so that the Bible can be understood as the truth.
- Put those ideas in tension with each other.

Answering Questions About Your Text

- What does this mean?
How Roman Centurions function.
- Is it true?
Don't assume people believe in miracles.
- What difference does it make?
Relevance, application for today.

Develop Appropriately

- Inductive or Deductive?
- Let the text guide you.

If it's: "The Feeding of the Multitude,"
which might you choose?

Develop Supporting Material

Restatement
Definition
Factual
Information
Quotations
Narration
Illustration

From: *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson

Six Kinds of Supporting Material

1. Restatement

How is this different from repetition?

In repetition you say the same thing by saying the same words. In restatement you ...

Say the same thing in different words.

Six Kinds of Supporting Material

2. Definition and Explanation

If you're preaching from Romans 12 you can ask, "By the way, what does it mean when the Bible calls something holy?"

Then answer "Often it means the item, 'belongs to God.'"

Six Kinds of Supporting Material

3. Factual Information

When Paul spoke to the Athenians in Acts 17 he quoted lines from two different Greek poems

By the way, this is one of Paul's ways of bridging the gap between cultures.

Six Kinds of Supporting Material

4. Quotations

"You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."

*Bishop Desmond Tutu, 77
Marriage Partnership, Vol. 7 No. 2*

Six Kinds of Supporting Material

5. Narration

"Saul traveled with his companions on dusty roads over 200 kilometers northeast from Jerusalem to Damascus, but he made an unexpected stop before reaching his destination."

Six Kinds of Supporting

6. Illustrations

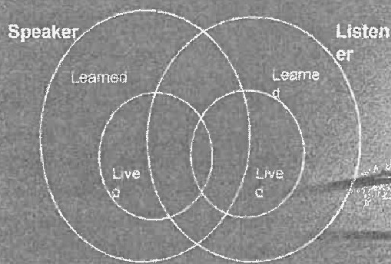
When we're saying something with a story or a thought that connects the idea with the audience.

When we take abstract ideas and make them into particulars.

Then the listener will say: "Now I see what you mean."



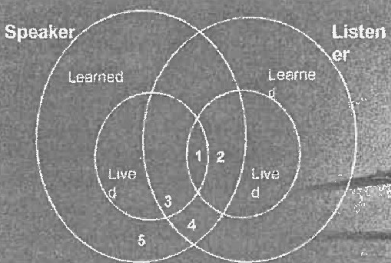
The 5 Levels of Illustration



Biblical Preaching



The 5 Levels of Illustration



Biblical Preaching
156



The Goal Is Transformation
A Change of Mind

"...it is apparent that the 'change of mind' and 'renewing of the mind' involved in biblical conversion and Christian maturation is first and foremost a changed worldview. Whatever terms might be used, worldview change is intrinsic to discipleship."

Hesselgrave, David. *Worldview*.

The Goal is Transformation
A Change of Heart

"If we are going to appeal to twenty-first century people's hearts, especially Asian Americans, we must prepare our messages with the goal of transformation, not merely the transfer of information, clearly fixed before us."

Fong, Ken. *Pursuing the Pearl*, p.

117

Goal is Transformation

Change of Heart: Inspiration.
Information. Variety.
Application

Miller, Calvin *Spirit, Word and Story*

"It was a love story."

Joy's Testimony

Editing

Communicating an unchanging message.

"Adapting the message does not mean changing the message as it is affirmed in the Scriptures. It requires, instead, that ability to focus historic truth on contemporary issues."

Engel, James. *Contemporary*

Editing Is Building A Bridge Ladder of Abstraction

Living thing	Living thing
Animal	Animal
Dog	Fish
Cocker Spaniel	Goldfish
Fido	Goldie

Higher levels of abstraction more ambiguous.

Lower levels more clear and interesting.

Editing Is Building A Bridge

Applying the Ladder of Abstraction
Go as far *down* the ladder as you can while still being understood by listeners.

Person	Person
--------	--------

Roman Centurion	Soldier
-----------------	---------

Gentile	Non-Jew
---------	---------

Where you are/context determines much of this. Ask for feedback.

Editing Is Building A Bridge

Writing a manuscript helps us edit

Example: Could "in the loop"
become "provided with
information?" "Could "too" which
sounds like a number, become
"also?"

Could "since" become "because?"

Editing Is Building A Bridge

Categories

Numbers

Can you substitute the metric
equivalent?

Geography

Have they been to Texas?

Culture

What To Watch For When Editing

We Have Tendencies:

- Phrases/idioms
- Abbreviations/slang
- Bad Grammar
- Humor
- Data/statistics

Let's focus specifically on the
introduction.

Editing Introductions

Build a bridge to the audience

From Matthew 9:20-22

Instead of beginning:

"A woman with a bleeding
problem came to Jesus."

How could you begin to build a
bridge to your audience with the
word "problem?"

So What is the Bridge?

- Bible
- Receiver/receptor
- Idea
- Develop appropriately –
from the text and to your
listeners.
- Goal – change of heart.....
- Edit to better connect

Session 3 Delivering the Sermon

The Purpose of this Session is for the
participants to learn the two general
practices of sermon delivery where
improvement may result in delivering
effective cross-cultural sermons.

Objectives: The participant is to:

1. Be able to list the effective practices of verbal
and non-verbal delivery.
2. Know how to obtain feedback on his/her
sermon delivery by using an evaluation form.

Sermon Delivery Verbal

Speak Slowly
Speak Clearly
Tell Stories (in 3-D)
Use Understandable (shorter)
Words
Minimize Cliches, Sarcasm &
Idioms
Avoid Negative Comparisons

Verbal

Sarcasm

Cliches

Idioms

Can we build the bridge while *using*
sarcasm, cliches or idioms?

Verbal

Would it be better to leave it out
or leave it in and explain it?

Sarcasm. Is it acceptable to use in
a sermon? Is it practiced in the
Bible?

Sermon Delivery - Nonverbal

It is widely believed that 93% of meaning in conversation is transmitted non-verbally. "Nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretation of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously." Dodd, Carley *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, P. 135



Nonverbal Communication

Categories

Body

Voice

Objects

Environment

Chartier, Myron. *Preaching As Communication*. Abingdon, 1981



Gestures

What Gestures Should
We Avoid?

Finger-pointing
Hands in pockets
OK sign

What Gestures
Should We
Substitute?



Occulesics
Perceived intention when we widen our eyes

Anglo	Surprise
Chinese	Anger
French	Challenge
Hispanic	Call for help
African American	Persuasion

Dodd, Carley. *Dynamics of Intercultural*

Effective Practices
Verbal
Speak Slowly, Clearly
Tell Stories, Use Understandable
(shorter) Words, Minimize
Cliches, Sarcasm & Idioms,
Avoid Negative Comparisons,
Watch Use of Humor

Nonverbal Categories

Getting Feedback

"We need feedback in order to keep people from misperception." Kraft, p. 226

Evaluation

The Power of Evaluation
We demonstrate openness.
We show our desire to improve.
God speaks through our people.
Aquila and Priscilla gave
feedback to Apollos – Acts
18:24-26
Some people will be hesitant to give you
negative feedback because of your
authority

Evaluation

“Understanding someone properly
involves learning from him, and
learning from someone properly
involves changing oneself.”

Hans Kung

The changes you make can lead to greater
understanding. Are we willing to build the
bridge by asking for feedback?

Today We Focused On
“Preaching In English
When Multiple
Language Groups Are
Present”

1. Communication
2. Our Preparation
3. Our Delivery

What will I do because of today?

- Re-examine my approach to communication?
- Make changes in preparation?
- Outlines, powerpoints, manuscripts?
- Ask for feedback on my delivery?
- Make nonverbal adjustments?
- Utilize evaluation forms?

It's all so we can:

**Preach Great
Sermons That Build
A Bridge Between
God's Word And
People!**

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Planter/Pastor, KingsWay Community Church, Mason, OH	(Sept. 1994 - Aug. 2004)
Associate Pastor, Kenwood Baptist Church, Cincinnati, OH	(June 1983 - Aug. 1994)
Minister of Youth, First Baptist Church, Kankakee, IL	(Feb. 1981 - June 1983)
Minister of Youth, First Baptist Church, Franklin, OH	(Jan. 1979 – Dec. 1980)